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LECTURES  
ON THE  
HISTORY OF PREACHING

BY

JOHN A. BROADUS, D.D., LL.D.,

PROF. IN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, LOUISVILLE, KY.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THESE lectures were delivered at the Newton Theological Institution, near Boston, in May last. I had been requested to discuss subjects connected with Homiletics, and the place of delivery was the lecture-room of the church. It was therefore necessary that the lectures should be popular in tone, and should abound in practical suggestions. Under such circumstances, I could not fail to perceive the difficulty of treating, in four or five lectures, so vast a subject as the History of Preaching. For this history is interwoven with the general history of Christianity, which itself belongs inseparably to the history of Civilization. Yet I greatly desired to develop, however imperfectly, the leading ideas involved in the history of preaching ; to show what causes brought about the prosperity of the pulpit at one time and its decline at another ; to indicate the great principles as to preach-

ing which are thus taught us. I trust that my attempt may be of service to those who have never made any survey of this wide field, and may stimulate some persons to study particular portions of it with thoroughness, and thus gradually to fill up the gap which here exists in English religious literature.

The principal helps which are accessible, chiefly in other languages, are mentioned in the Appendix. While using them with diligence, I have scarcely ever simply borrowed their statements, and in such cases have always indicated the fact. Where not giving the results of my own study and teaching in the past, I have sought to test by personal examination the ideas and critical judgments of others, before adopting them. At some points my knowledge has of necessity been quite limited. If errors have arisen as to matter of fact, I shall esteem it a favor to have them pointed out. As regards the merits of particular preachers, there is of course much room for difference of opinion. The sketches of eminent preachers are usually very slight, but it could not be otherwise if space was to be saved for general ideas and for practical hints.

Some further explanations will be found at the beginning and end of the closing lecture.

The kind reception given to the lectures at Newton by a general audience of ladies and gentlemen, as well as by the Faculty and Students, has led me to hope that they may find readers who are not ministers, but who take interest in preaching, in Christianity, in history.

God grant that the little volume may be of some real use.

GREENVILLE, S. C., Oct., 1876.



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## APPENDIX.

## ON THE LITERATURE OF THE SUBJECT.



## LECTURE I.

### SPECIMENS OF PREACHING IN THE BIBLE

It is my purpose in these lectures to offer you some observations on the History of Preaching. The subject is obviously too vast to be treated in five lectures. You will please notice, therefore, that I shall by no means attempt a systematic discussion of the history of preaching, but shall only make observations upon some of its most characteristic and instructive periods. My general plan will be as follows:—While giving a brief account of the leading preachers in one of these periods, I shall concern myself chiefly with two inquiries; first, what was the relation of these preachers to their own time, and secondly, what are the principal lessons they have left for us. These lessons will in part be formally stated, but will often come out only in the way of incidental remark as we go on. I hope that we shall thus draw from the wide field of our contemplation some immediate instruction

6  
ON HISTORY OF PREACHING.

and stimulus for our own work as preachers, and also that you may become so far interested in the subject as hereafter to occupy yourselves, more largely than might otherwise have been the case, with the truly magnificent literature of the Pulpit.

This first lecture will be devoted to Preaching in the Bible. I can only mention some of the most important examples, including one or two secular speeches which are of some interest. On the Old Testament it is necessary to be particularly brief, in order to discuss somewhat more fully the preaching of our Lord.

The speech of Judah before Joseph, is unsurpassed in all literature as an example of the simplest, tenderest, truest pathos. And if you want to see the contrast between pathos and bathos as you will rarely see it elsewhere, just read the reproduction of this speech by Philo (Works, II, 73, Mangey), elaborated in the starchy fashion of the Alexandrian school—and do by all means read this as translated and expanded in worthy Dr. Hunter's Sacred Biography, ironed out and smoothed down into the miraculous elegance of style which belongs to the school of Dr. Blair.

That two men of cultivation, one of them a man of eminent ability, should regard this vapid stuff as in any sense an improvement upon Judah's speech, is a phenomenon in criticism, and a warning to rhetoricians.

We have a Farewell Address from Moses, viz. the Book of Deuteronomy. And like many English and German discourses, the sermon ends with a hymn, composed by the preacher. Some students of Homiletics would at once fasten on the fact that this first recorded example of an extended discourse was a *written* sermon. Others would reply that in this case the speaker was aware that he was not, by training or by nature, an orator, but a man "slow of speech and slow of tongue." The one remark would be about as good as the other, each of them amounting to very little—as is the case with a great many other remarks that are made on both sides of the question thus alluded to.

There are two brief Farewell Addresses from Joshua, which are really quite remarkable, as might appear if we had time to analyze them, in their finely rhetorical use of historical narrative, animated dialogue, and imaginative and passionate appeal.

The brief speech of Jotham (Jud. ix.) is noteworthy, for although a purely secular speech, it offers several points of suggestion to preachers. (1) He had a magnificent pulpit, standing high on the steep sides of Mt. Gerizim—and some people appear to think the pulpit a great matter in preaching. (2) He had a powerful voice, for although beyond the reach of arrow or sling, he could make himself heard far below. This is not only an important gift for open-air preaching, but it will be indispensable for all preachers if we are to have many more of these dreadful Gothic churches, which are so admirable for everything except the proper object of a church, to be a place for speaking and hearing. (3) He employed a striking illustration, a fable. (4) He applied the illustration, in a very direct and outspoken manner, without fear or favor. (5) He ran away from the sensation he had made.

David possessed such unique and unrivalled gifts as a sacred *poet*, that we are apt not to think of him as a speaker. But in sooth, this extraordinary man seems to have been a universal genius, if ever there was one, as well as to have had that for which Margaret Fuller used to sigh, a universal experi-

ence. And his speeches to Saul (1 Sam. xxiv and xxvi), with his reply to Abigail (chap. xxv), do seem to me, though so briefly recorded, to exhibit eloquence of a very high order, on which you would find it instructive and stimulating to meditate. We ought to notice, too, the singularly skilful and effective speech addressed to David by Abigail. Its tact and sagacity are truly feminine; some of the most destructive German critics have admitted that this at least is a genuine bit. Persons in search of Scripture precedents might in this case also imagine themselves to find one, by noting that we have here a *woman* speaking in public. But again there is an obvious reply, that this was not really a public address, but a petition addressed to one man, and that in behalf of her husband, because he was a “fool” and could not speak for himself. The address of Nathan to David, the winning and touching parable with which he stirs the king’s feelings and awakens his sense of right and wrong, and then the sudden and pointed application, and fierce outpouring of the story of his crimes, strikes even the most careless reader as a model of reproof, a gem of eloquence.

Solomon, at the Dedication of the Temple, made

an address to the people, and then a prayer, the first *reported* prayer of any considerable length—a prayer strikingly appropriate, carefully arranged, and very impressive.

The singular book of Ecclesiastes is a religious discourse, a sermon. Its mournful text is often repeated, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” The discourse should be read *as a whole*, or listened to while another reads, its successive portions ever coming back, like a certain class of modern sermons, to the text as a melancholy refrain, sinking ever deeper into your heart with its painful but wholesome lesson, till at last the ringing conclusion is reached, “Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man”—the whole of his duty and his destiny, the whole of his real pleasure, the whole of his true manliness, the *all* of man. I think we ought never to repeat “All is vanity” without adding

Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is all.”

But the great preachers of Old Testament times were the Prophets. You are no doubt all aware

that the New Testament minister corresponds not ~~at all~~ to the Old Testament *priest*, but in important respects to the Old Testament *prophet*. Alas! that the great majority of the Christian world so early lost sight of this fact, and that many are still so slow, even among Protestants, to perceive it clearly. The New Testament minister is not a priest, a *cleric*—except in so far as *all* Christians are a priesthood, a clergy, viz., the Lord's heritage—he is a *teacher* in God's name, even as the Old Testament prophet was a teacher, with the peculiar advantage of being inspired. You also know that it was by no means the main business of the prophets to predict the future—as people are now apt to suppose from our modern use of the word prophet—but that they spoke of the past and the present, often much more than of the future. The prophets reminded the people of their sins, exhorted them to repent, and instructed them in religious and moral, in social and personal duties; and when they predicted the future, it was almost always in the way of warning or encouragement, as a motive to forsake their sins and serve God. The predictive element naturally attracts the chief

attention of Bible readers to-day, and yet in reality, as things stood then, it was almost always subordinate, and often comparatively diminutive. The prophets were preachers.

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The earlier prophets have left us no full record of their inspired teachings. From Samuel we have a few brief addresses, wise and weighty; from the great Elijah, several single sentences, spoken on great occasions, and which are flashes of lightning in a dark night, revealing to us the whole man and his surroundings. Abrupt, terse, vehement, fiery, these utterances are volcanic explosions from a fire long burning within, and they make us feel the power, the tremendous power, of the inspired speaker. It is true of every born orator, that in his grandest utterances you yet feel the man himself to be greater than all he has said. And so we feel as to Elijah. You have doubtless observed that Elijah has given us a striking example of the use of *ridicule* in sacred discourse. He *mocked* the priests of Baal, before all the people. Idolatry is essentially absurd, and ridicule was therefore a fair way of exposing it. In like manner, all irreligion has aspects and elements that are absurd, and it is sometimes

useful (if carefully done) to show this by irony and ~~sarcasm~~ ridicule. In the book of Proverbs, irreligion is constantly stigmatized as *folly*, and frequently depicted with the keenest sarcasm. Slight touches of irony and scorn are also observed in the apostle Paul. ~~preach~~ We have then a certain amount of Scripture example for the use of ridicule in preaching. But it should be a sparing use, and very carefully managed.

Notice now the prophets from whom some connected teachings are preserved — what we call *books* of the prophets.

Some of these were highly educated men, perhaps trained, as some writers think, in the Theological Schools begun by Samuel, "the schools of the prophets." Yet others were destitute of all such training. Amos says expressly (vii, 14) that he was "no prophet nor a prophet's son," i. e., not trained in the schools as one of the so-called "sons of the prophets," but that he was a shepherd and gardener. Accordingly, many of his illustrations are rural, and they are fresh, as we sometimes find now in a gifted but uneducated country preacher. The prophets frequently quote each other, as is well

known, and besides quotations, they often exhibit such similarity in leading thoughts and favorite expressions as seems to indicate that they had studied in the same schools. At any rate, they did carefully *study* the inspired discourses of their predecessors and contemporaries. Take now a few examples.

From Jonah, we have apparently only the burden or refrain of his preaching in Nineveh, and can learn very little in the rhetorical sense, but we catch right impressive glimpses of his character and feeling. You see him (1) Shrinking from his task—as has been since done by many a preacher, young and old. (2) Desponding when the excitement of long-continued and impassioned preaching had been followed by reaction; ready to take unhealthy views of his preaching and its results, of God and man, of life and of death. (3) So much concerned for his own credit—more, in that morbid hour, than for the welfare of man or the glory of God.

Isaiah The most eloquent of all the prophets, the one from whom most can be learned as to preaching, is obviously Isaiah. Isaiah was the very opposite of Amos, the shepherd and gardener. He lived

at court during several reigns, and in that of Hezekiah was high in influence. He was a highly educated man, a man of refined taste, and singular literary power and skill. He enjoyed in the best sense of that now often misused term, the advantage of Culture, with all its light and its sweetness. His writings, like all the other inspired books, take their literary character from the natural endowments, educational advantages, and social condition, of the man. They exhibit an imperial imagination, controlled by a disciplined intellect and by good taste. This imagination shows itself in vivid and rapid description, as well as in imagery. The careful and loving study of Isaiah has educated many a preacher's imagination to an extent of which he was by no means conscious, and few things are so important to an orator as the real cultivation of imagination. True, the book of Isaiah presents the poetic oftener than the strictly oratorical use of this faculty. But the two shade into each other; and we also, when we become greatly excited, and our hearers with us, do naturally use in speaking such imaginative conceptions and expressions as generally belong only to poetry. In Part I of the book

of Isaiah the oratorical element very distinctly predominates—it is direct address, aiming at practical results in those who hear. Sometimes the style even sinks into quiet narrative, but oftener it rises into passionate appeal. And in Part II (from the 40th chapter on), the orator is lost in the poet. The prophet's soul is completely carried away by imagination and passion, till we have no longer an inspired orator directly addressing us, but a rapt seer, bursting into song, pouring forth in rhythmical strains his inspired and impassioned predictions. He is like the angel that appeared to the shepherds, whose message soon passed into song. Besides the yet higher blessings which have come to the world from the devotional and practical, the predictive and theological contents of this grand prophet's writings, who can estimate how much he has done in training servants of God for the highest and truest forms of religious eloquence !

Jeremiah Jeremiah, whom the Jews of our Lord's time regarded as perhaps the greatest of the prophets, has in modern times been much misunderstood, the popular term "jeremiad" representing him as a doleful and weak lamentor, like some of the "weeping

preachers" we occasionally see, whose chief capacity seems to lie in the lachrymal organs. But Jeremiah uttered his "Lamentations" upon such great and mournful occasion as might make the strongest man weep, if truly patriotic and deeply pious. And his discourses, like his personal history, recall no tearful weakling, but a statesman and preacher of strong character and intense earnestness, tender in pity but resolute of purpose. Such a man's bursts of passionate grief are a mighty power in eloquence. Jeremiah is also an example in the way of preaching unwritten discourses, and then, by divine direction, gathering them up into a book, with the hope of thus renewing and deepening their impression on the popular mind (xxxvi, 2, 3).

Among the other prophets I can only say a word as to Ezekiel. His high-wrought imagery has little power to develop our imagination (compared with Isaiah), because mainly very far removed from our modes of thought and feeling. But as to the *spirit* of the preacher he offers us singularly valuable instruction. *E. g.*, "And go, get thee unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them and tell them *Thus saith the Lord Jehovah*, whether they

will hear, or whether they will forbear." "When I say unto the wicked, O wicked (man), thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." Nor are there any sadder words in all the Bible for a preacher, any that more touchingly appeal to a common and mournful experience, than the following: "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not." Alas! how often still, they come and hear, they are entertained and pleased, they go off with idle praises, and that is all!

We cannot stop to speak of Ezra, and his grand expository discourse "from the morning until midday;" nor of Malachi, with his sharp common sense, and his home-thrusts of question and an

swer; nor of that curious production of the Inter-biblical period called the 4th Book of Maccabees, really a sort of sermon by a Jew who had become a Stoic philosopher; nor of much else that might have some interest—for we must come at once to the New Testament.

John the Baptist, the herald of Messiah's approach, presents several good lessons as to preaching. Consider (1) His fearlessness. The Pharisees and Sadducees represented the culture and wealth, the best social respectability and religious reputation of the time, and yet when their conduct demanded it, he boldly called them a 'brood of vipers.' He was braver than Elijah, who faced Ahab but was so frightened by one threatening message from Jezebel that he ran the whole length of the land, and a day's journey into the desert, and wanted to die; while the new Elijah declared Herodias an adulteress, though he knew her character and must have foreseen her relentless wrath. (2) His humility—always turning attention away from himself to the Coming One, testifying of him on every occasion, willing to decrease that he might

increase. (3) His practicalness. He brought a grand and thrilling announcement, but brought also a practical injunction, for which it was to be the motive. "The reign of heaven has come near—therefore repent." And you have noticed his remarkable directions in Luke iii, to the people at large, to the publicans, to the soldiers, indicating to each class its characteristic fault, hitting the nail on the head at every blow. (4) His striving after immediate results. He did not say, go off and think about it, and in the course of time you may come to repentance; he said, repent now, profess it now, and show it henceforth, by fruit worthy of repentance. (5) His use of a ceremony to reinforce his preaching, and exhibit its results—a ceremony so solemn to those receiving it, so impressive to the spectators. Many a prophet had preached that men should repent, *i. e.*, should turn from their sins, many had enforced the exhortation by predicting the coming of Messiah (though they could not declare it to be certainly near), but here was a striking novelty; this prophet bade them receive, and *at his hands*, a most thorough purification, in token that they did repent, and

did wish to be subjects of the kingdom of God. This striking and novel ceremony gave name, among all the people, to the man and his ministry. John the Baptizer, he was universally called, as we see from the fact that he is so named in the Gospels and Acts, and in Josephus too. And when Jesus in the last week of his ministry asked the chief priests and scribes a question about John, he did not say, the preaching of John—nor, the ministry of John—nor, the work of John—but, “the baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?” That represented to the people his whole mission. Now apart from all its significance in other respects, we can see that this ceremony had an important bearing on his *preaching*, as picturing what the preaching demanded, and as an appropriate action by which the people promptly set forth the effect which the preaching had produced on them. Many of the measures employed now, by which hearers may show that they are impressed, and profess their purposes, are but appeals, more or less wise, to these same principles of human nature to which John’s baptism appealed.

The central figure of Scripture, for our present purpose as in all other respects, is the Saviour himself. We can but touch a few of the many points that here present themselves. Our Lord as a Preacher, is a topic that has waited through all the ages for thorough treatment, and is waiting still.

(1) Every one observes that as a preacher our Lord was authoritative. You know that the tone of the ordinary Jewish teachers at that time was quite different from this. If some question was under discussion in synagogue or theological school, an aged man with flowing white beard and tremulous voice would say "When I was a boy, my grandfather who was a Rabbi often told me how R. Nathan Bar Tolmai used to say—so and so." For them nothing was weighty till sanctified by antiquity, nothing could be settled save by the accumulation of many ancient opinions. But here came a teacher who spake 'as one having authority,' who continually repeated, 'Ye have heard that it was said to the *ancients*, but *I* say to you;' in a way which no one could think of calling egotism, which all recognized as the tone of conscious and true authority. Of course our Lord was unique in this respect,

but in truth every preacher who is to accomplish much must, in his manner and degree, speak with authority. And do you ask how *we* may attain this? For one thing, by personal study of Scripture. What you have drawn right out of the Bible, by your own laborious examination, you will unconsciously state with a tone of authority. Again, by personally systematizing the teachings of Scripture, or at any rate carefully scrutinizing any proposed system in every part before accepting it, so that you feel confident, as a matter of personal conviction, that it is true. Further, by personal experience 3. of the power of the truth. And in general, by personal character. And the authority drawn from all these sources will be every year augmented by the usefulness already achieved, for the French proverb is here profoundly true, "There is nothing that succeeds like success."

(2) I shall not dwell upon the originality of our Lord's preaching. This has been sufficiently treated by various popular writers. In fact, I think they have insisted too much on this point, and I prefer to urge,

(3) That although so original, he brought his

teachings into relation to the common mind. He did not startle his hearers with his originality, but employed current modes of thought and expression. *E. g.*, The Golden Rule was not wholly new to the world. Confucius, Isocrates and others had taught the negative side of it; our Lord states it as a positive precept, thus making the rule much more comprehensive, and more widely important. Moreover, the essential principle was really contained in Lev. xix, 18. So the Golden Rule was not presented as something absolutely new. Again, the thought of the Fatherhood of God was not alien to the heathen mind, and was sometimes taught in the Old Testament. Christ brought it out clearly, and made the thought familiar and sweet. Furthermore, he taught much that had to be more fully developed by the apostles; since men could not understand any full account of certain doctrines till the facts upon which they were to rest had taken place—for example, atonement and intercession. And he acted upon the same principle in his mode of stating things. He used proverbs and other current modes of expression. He drew illustrations entirely from things familiar with his hearers. And what they

could not then understand he stated in parables, which might be remembered for future reflection.

I repeat, then, that our Lord tempered his originality, so as to keep his teachings within reach of the common mind. If you are teaching a child, you do not present thoughts entirely apart from and above the child's previous consciousness; you try to link the new thoughts to what the child has thought of before. Thus wisely did our Lord teach the human race. But unreflecting followers have felt bound to insist that his ethical as well as his theological teachings were absolutely original; and superficial opposers have imagined they were detracting from his honor when they showed that for the most part he only carried farther and lifted higher and extended more widely the views of ethical truth which had been dimly caught by the universal human mind, or had at least been seen by the loftiest souls. What they make an objection is a part of the wisdom of our Lord's preaching.

(4) His teachings were to a great extent controversial, polemical. He was constantly aiming at some error or evil practice existing among his

hearers. You remember at once how this principle pervades the entire Sermon on the Mount. His strong words as to wealth and poverty were addressed to the Jews, who believed that to be rich was a proof of God's favor, and to be poor was a sure sign of his displeasure. "No man can come to me except the Father which sent me draw him," was said to the fanatical crowd who imagined they were coming to him and following him because they were gaping at his miracles and delighted to get food without work. Like examples abound. In fact, there are very few of his utterances that have not a distinctly polemical character, aimed at his immediate hearers; and we must take account of this, as affecting not the principles but the mode of stating them, or we shall often fail to make exact and just interpretation of his teachings. The lesson here as to our own preaching is obvious, though very important. Truth, in this world oppressed with error, cannot hope, has no right, to *keep the peace*. Christ came not to cast peace upon the earth, but a sword. We must not shrink from antagonism and conflict in proclaiming the gospel, publicly or privately; though in fearlessly maintain-

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ing this conflict we must not sacrifice courtesy, or true Christian charity.

(5) Our Lord's frequent *repetitions* are remarkable and instructive. I shall mention some examples, of course not giving mere parallel accounts from the different Evangelists of the same occasion, but cases in which the same saying is recorded as repeated on different occasions.

The Son of man is come to save that which was lost, was spoken *twice*, Matt. xviii, 11; Luke xix, 10. If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, etc. (3), Matt. xvii, 20; xxi, 21; Luke xvii, 5. Whosoever shall confess me, etc. (3), Matt. x, 32; Luke xii, 8; ix, 26. He that finds his life shall lose it, etc., (4), Matt. x, 38-9; xvi. 24-5; Luke xvii, 33; John xii, 25. Take up his cross and follow me (4), Matt. x. 38; xvi, 24; Luke xiv, 27; Mark x, 21. Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, etc. (3), Matt. xxiii, 12; Luke xiv, 11; xviii, 14. Except ye become as little children, etc. (2), Matt. xviii. 3; xix, 14; and other modes, besides these two, of inculcating the same lesson of *humility* (2), Matt. xx, 26; Jo. xiii, 13 ff. (compr. Luke xxii, 24, ff.)

The servant is not greater than his lord (4). Matt. x. 24; Luke vi. 40; John xiii, 6, and xv, 20, where he refers to the fact that he had told them this before. In two other cases, John xiii, 33 (comp. vii. 34; viii. 21), and x, 26, he speaks of having before told them what he is now saying again.

Where I am, there shall also my servant be (3), John xii, 26; xiv, 3; xvii, 24.

To these examples of short sayings (and there are others) add the fact that considerable portions of the Sermon on the Mount, as given by Matthew, are also given by Matthew and the other Synoptics as spoken on other occasions. *E. g.*, The remarkable exhortation to take no thought, etc., ten verses of Matt. vi, is reproduced with slight alteration in Luke xii, the former in Galilee, the latter probably long afterwards, and in Judea or Perea. The Lord's Prayer, Matt. vi, 9-13, was given on a later occasion, Luke xi, 2-4, in a greatly shortened form (according to the correct text), but with all the leading thoughts retained. So likewise the instructions to the 70 disciples (Luke x, 1, ff.) closely resemble those previously given to the twelve apos-

ties (Matt. x, 5, ff.) The lament over Jerusalem was made three times, and our Lord foretold his death to his disciples five times. The parable of the *pounds* (Luke xix.) was reproduced a few days afterwards in the parable of the *talents* (Matt. xxv.), with only some special features omitted.

There are numerous other examples. And that so many should occur in the four extremely brief memoirs we have, the fourth, too, being almost entirely different from the others, is very remarkable. These repetitions may for the most part be classified as follows : (1) Different audiences, being similar in condition and wants, needed some of the same lessons. (2) Some brief, pithy sayings would naturally be introduced in different connections. (3) Some lessons were particularly hard to be learned, as humility, cross-bearing, etc.; and so as to the great difficulty the twelve had in believing that the Messiah was really going to be rejected and put to death.

And what instruction do we find for ourselves in this marked feature of our Lord's preaching? Here was the wisest of all teachers; in him was no poverty of resources, no shrinking from mental exer-

tion. He must have repeated because it was best to repeat. Freshness and variety are very desirable, no doubt ; but the fundamental truths of Christianity are not numerous, and men really need to have them often repeated. And many preachers, carried away by the tendencies of the present age, our furious 19th century, when the chief reading of most people is newspapers and books called emphatically *novels*, and the *κανότερον τι* of the lounging Athenians pales before the eagerness with which we rush to bulletin boards to catch the yet later news that has just girdled the world,—many preachers go wild with the desire for novelty and the dread of repetition, and fall to preaching politics and news, science and speculation, anything, everything, to be *fresh*. Let the example of the Great Preacher be to us a rebuke, a caution, a comfort. A preacher should be a living man, and strive to get hold of his contemporaries ; yet nearly all of the good that preachers do is done not by new truths but by old truths, with fresh combination, illustration, application, experience, but old truths, yea, and often repeated in similar phrase, without apology and without fear.

(6) There is no real conflict with all this when we add: Consider the wonderful variety of our Lord's methods of teaching. Variety as to place. He preached in synagogues, courts of the temple, private houses; in deserts, on the mountain side, by the lake shore, from the boat; to crowds, or to single persons; anywhere, everywhere. Variety, too, as to occasion. Some of his discourses were deliberately undertaken, it would seem, with reference to certain conjunctures in his ministry, as the Sermon on the Mount, the instructions preceding the Mission of the Twelve (Matt. x), the discourse on the Mount of Olives, the Farewell Address to his disciples, etc. But most of them appear to have been suggested at the moment, by particular events and circumstances, as the visit of Nicodemus, the woman coming to Jacob's well, the message of John the Baptist, the application of the rich young man, the story of the Galileans whom Pilate had slain, etc.

And variety as to modes of stating truth. He employed authoritative assertion, arguments of many kinds, explanation, illustration, appeal and warning. He also used striking paradoxes and hyperbol

ical expressions to wake up his hearers, and make them listen and remember and think, *e. g.*, "Who-soever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Let us pause a moment, and consider. Many persons have been *perplexed* by this saying of our Lord, many have *misunderstood* it, but one thing is certain, no one ever *forgot* it, when once read or heard, and no one ever failed to reflect that it stands in the strongest antagonism to our natural feelings of resentment and revenge. Now remember. Our Lord was for the most part a street preacher and a field preacher. He had to gather his audiences and hold them, to awaken their minds, to lodge some leading and suggestive truths permanently in their memory. When we recall these conditions of his teaching, together with the fact that many of his hearers were indifferent and not a few were hostile, we may perceive why he should have somewhat frequently used what we may fairly call extravagant hyperboles, sayings which will mislead if taken literally, but which understood as they were intended are in an unrivalled degree instructive and suggestive, sure to be remembered, weighty and mighty.

In thus using pithy, and paradoxical or hyperbolical statements, our Lord was suiting himself to the *customs* as well as the wants of his hearers. There are scores of the Proverbs of Solomon, that are really of the same character. *E. g.*, what does this mean? ‘When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, mark well what is before thee; and put a knife to thy throat if thou art given to appetite’ (Prov. xxiii, 2). Better cut your throat than eat greedily before his excellency. And so with many other sayings of the uninspired Jewish teachers, as recorded in some of the Rabbinical books.\*

“But are not such expressions hard to interpret, and likely to be misunderstood?” Yes, they require care, breadth of view and sound judgment to interpret them. And I think it absolutely necessary, if we would interpret aright the teachings of our Lord, to remember that he spoke not as a scientific lecturer but as a *preacher*, a preacher for the most part to the common people, an open-air preacher, addressing restless and mainly unsympathizing crowds. In fact one will be all the better

\* My attention was called to this last fact by my colleague Dr. Tox.

prepared to interpret these discourses if he has himself had experience of practical preaching under similar conditions. Some of our Lord's paradoxical and hyperbolical sayings have been often and grievously misunderstood. Interpreting them literally, some good people have tried, for example, to refrain from all self-defence, to give to all beggars, etc. ; and other good people, seeing that these things were impracticable, have sadly despaired of living in any respect up to the requirements of him who has so earnestly urged us to hear his sayings and do them ; while many opposers have sneeringly said that the morality taught by Jesus is impossible, and therefore really unwise. Misunderstood—yes, I suppose our Lord has been worse misunderstood than any other teacher that ever spoke to the human race. But what of that ? All powerful things are very dangerous if improperly handled. That which can do no harm though misused, can it do any good ? Our attempts at usefulness in this world may always be represented as to their results by this simple algebraical formula : + So much good done—So much harm done == So much. It is our duty, as far as possible,

to diminish the harm as well as increase the good ; but can we ever reduce the harm down to zero, without reducing the good to zero too ? If we are too painfully solicitous to avoid doing harm, we shall do *nothing*.

The notions of our "sensation preachers" contain an element of truth. And to find that true and good and mighty something which they grope after in darkness and do not reach, we have but to study the preaching of Jesus Christ.

(7) I add but a word as to his tone and spirit. These cannot be fully analyzed, but we must seek to imitate them as far as we can apprehend, or can catch by sympathy. We must meditate on his perfect fidelity to truth, and yet perfect courtesy and kindness ; his severity in rebuking, without any tinge of bitterness ; his directness and simplicity, and yet his tact—wise as the serpent, with the simplicity of the dove ; his complete sympathy with man, and also complete sympathy with God —bringing heaven down to earth, that he might X lift up earth to heaven.

And so in him we see, as we see in all his more worthy followers, that materials of preaching

are important, and methods of preaching are important, but that most important of all is personal character and spirit.

I have time for but a few words as to the preaching of the Apostles. I regret this, because we may find in their discourses a greater number of practical lessons as to preaching, than in other parts of Scripture. But it is also *easier* to find those lessons here than elsewhere, and one who is interested in the matter will have comparatively little need of help.

The apostolical *Epistles* were not in general expected to be *read* by all or by many of those to whom they were sent, but were written addresses, designed to be read out in meeting, and listened to. Most of them are really *written sermons*, not written to be read by the author himself, but sent to some distant church to be read there by another person. Especially is this true of 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Colossians, and the Circular letter or address which we call Ephesians; also of the discourses sent out by James, Peter, Jude, John. Most of all is it true of the epistle or discourse

to the Hebrews, which has every mark of being a sermon, and concerning the origin of which I decidedly prefer the theory of Clement and Origen, that it was a sermon preached by Paul, and reported by some other person, perhaps by Luke, who has reported so many other discourses of his in Acts. However that may be, it is clear that many of what we commonly describe as epistles are really sermons. Nearly all of those to whom they were originally addressed got their knowledge of them not by reading them but by *hearing* them read, as it is said in the Apocalypse, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear," etc. It is important to recall this fact for several reasons.

(1) In the enthusiasm which is now rightly and nobly felt for popular education, there is danger of our imagining that the ability to read is indispensable to one's being a Christian. Certainly it is eminently desirable that the freedmen of the South, for example, should learn to read, and we must all labor for this; and yet some of them are not only sincere but somewhat intelligent Christians, simply by *hearing* the Bible read, as among the early Christians. (2) If the apostolical discourses were

originally designed to be read aloud to congregations, do they not err who suppose that there is little need *now* of publicly reading the Scriptures, because "everybody," as they phrase it, can now read the Bible for himself? Still is the saying true, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear." (3) What we call the Epistles can often be better understood by studying them as discourses than as in the strict sense epistles. And useful lessons can be drawn from them as to the best methods of preaching.

Besides these great discourses, written *verbatim* after the dictation of the inspired authors, we have in Acts brief and usually condensed reports of other discourses, chiefly addresses by Peter and by Paul. From all these there is really much to be learned as to methods of preaching. Especially do the discourses, both in Acts and in the so-called Epistles, of the great apostle Paul, furnish a rich field for homiletical study.

How profitable it would be to examine narrowly his argumentation, as in Galatians, Romans, Colossians, Hebrews. Also to study his bursts of passionate feeling, and vehement exhortations, as

in 2 Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, Hebrews. How instructive would be the collection and classification of his illustrations, which are not often drawn from nature (as in James), but chiefly from the practical life of men, their business, their amusements, etc. And his style is singularly rich in rhetorical lessons—a style consisting not in quietly earnest and straightforward talk, like practical Peter, and not poetic, pictorial, vivid like James, but logic set on fire—a ceaseless stream of argument and earnest appeal, often swelling into a torrent which bears everything along, confusedly, perhaps, but with mighty force, resistlessly. You see in the various addresses and epistles of Paul the style of a many-sided man—here a Boanerges in passionate vehemence, and there as tender as a woman's love—hesitating not to break sentences in twain by sudden bursts or digressions—piling strong words upon each other, like Ossa upon Pelion, in the struggling effort to reach the height of his great argument, to give fit expression to his swelling emotion—scorning the 'wisdom of words,' the strained and artificial energy and elegance in which the degenerate Greeks of the day delighted, and

yet producing without apparent effort a gem of literary beauty not surpassed in all the world's literature, that eulogium upon love, which blazes like a diamond on the bosom of Scripture. As I said of Isaiah, so it may be said of Paul, that thousands have unconsciously learned from him how to preach. And how much richer and more complete the lesson may be if we will apply ourselves to it consciously and thoughtfully.

One point as to the great apostle's preaching I must not omit to mention—the striking *adaptation* of every discourse to the audience and the occasion. You have noticed that in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia he spoke as a Jew to the Jews, arguing from Scripture and from their national history. At Lystra, among ignorant and barbarous idolators, he utters the simplest truths of natural religion, while at Athens those same truths were brought out with varied, profound and skilful argument, and with a courtly grace of expression which came spontaneously to the lips of a cultivated and refined man in addressing such an audience. Similar examples of adaptation are seen in the great series of *Apologies*, before the fanatical

Jews who had been trying to kill him in the temple court, before the Sanhedrim, before Felix and Festus, before Agrippa, and to the Jews at Rome. No one of all the apostle's discourses recorded in Acts would have been suitable to take the place of any other. So likewise as to his Epistles. Think of sending Romans to Corinth, or Colossians to Rome—and so of the rest.

There is here a surpassingly important lesson for preachers. Every discourse ought to be so carefully and precisely adapted to the particular audience and occasion, that it would not suit another occasion or audience without important alteration. Very rarely is it allowable, if ever, to make a sermon so general that it will suit all places equally well, for then it does not *exactly* suit *any* place. If you do not attempt to imitate Paul in anything else as to preaching, be sure to follow his example in this—that you try to adapt every sermon to that time, that place, that people; and if you repeat it elsewhere, search eagerly beforehand to find out at least some points of specific adaptation to the new occasion and congregation. Even though these points be sometimes very slight in them

selves, yet they may act like the delicate tendrils which hold the vine to its supports, and are essential to its fruitfulness.

I close with one general inquiry. When we note how many specimens of eloquence the Scriptures present, and see how instructive they are, even upon a hurried glance, are we to conclude, as some virtually maintain, that the Art of Preaching should be learned exclusively from the Bible? I answer, No, by no means. Men think they put honor upon the Bible by maintaining this, and by insisting that Homiletics shall be regarded as essentially distinct from Rhetoric. In like manner some are very unwilling to admit that Christian *sculpture* is inferior to that of the ancient Greeks; and I remember an American book in which it is earnestly contended that the model of the Parthenon must have been derived from Solomon's temple—through the Phenicians, to be sure. Justin Martyr, who lived in Palestine less than a century after the crucifixion, told Trypho that Jesus, in his carpenter-life at Nazareth, made ploughs and ox-yokes, and there is nothing improbable in the statement. Would you

suppose that he made ploughs of a new pattern, greatly better than those in use there before? Why should he not introduce all our modern improvements in ploughs, yea, and all those of the ages yet to come? You answer, our Lord came into the world to teach moral and spiritual truth, and not to introduce mechanical inventions. Precisely so as to architecture, then, and sculpture, and all the arts, including the art of Rhetoric. In speaking, our Lord and the prophets and the apostles have left us noble and highly instructive examples, from which we ought lovingly to learn. But they employed the methods common in their time, and natural to the Shemitic races. And we are really following their example, in the spirit of it, if we employ the methods best suited to the Aryan races, and to modern thought and modern feeling.

## LECTURE II.

### ON PREACHING IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CENTURIES.

THE ascension of our Lord, according to the most probable Chronology, was in A. D. 30. Now in A. D. 430 was the death of Augustine, the last *great* preacher of the early centuries. We thus have a period of exactly four centuries. If we divide this, the year 230 will fairly represent the life and work of Origen (died 253), who forms the transition from the earlier to the later style of Christian preaching.

We have first to deal, then, with the two centuries from 30 to 230, from the Ascension to the time of Origen.

For the greater part of this first period, we know very little of Christian preaching, after the close of the New Testament itself. The few works that remain to us from the so-called Apostolic

Fathers, are related to preaching just as were the Epistles of the inspired Apostles. They are letters, but designed to be read in public, and some of them showing oratorical feeling, though they have not the oratorical form. Still more is this true of Justin Martyr, particularly in his *Apologies*; you feel that here is a thoroughly oratorical nature. Ignatius, Justin, Polycarp, must have been vigorous, impassioned, powerful preachers; and so with some of the other “*Apologists*” (besides Justin), whose writings in defence of Christianity remain to us. But from none of them does anything remain that could be called a *sermon*, nor from any one else before Origen, except two small fragments of homilies from the famous Gnostic Valentinus (preserved by Clement of Alexandria), which are of curious interest, but not homiletically instructive. Irenæus was a man of great earnestness and force, but not even in the references to his lost writings is there any mention of sermons. The writings of Tertullian amply show that he was a born orator. His penetrating insight into subjects, his splendid imagination, his overpowering passion, the torrent-like movement of his style, heedless

of elegance and of grammatical accuracy, his very exaggerations, and his fiery assaults upon his antagonists, all seem to show the man born to be a speaker. A lawyer in his youth, it is natural to suppose that he exercised himself much in oral Christian teaching, and his great familiarity with the Bible qualified him for the task. But none of his writings approach the form of a sermon. We should not even know from his own works, that he ever became a presbyter, though Jerome states that he did.

For this almost entire want of sermons remaining from the first two centuries, there are several reasons, which we need not go far to seek.

*social  
in time* The preaching of the time was in general quite informal. The preacher did not make *λόγοις*, discourses, but only *διηλίας*, homilies, that is conversations, talks. Even in the fourth century, there was still retained, by some out of the way congregations, the practice of asking the preacher many questions, and answering questions asked by him, so as to make the homily to some extent a conversation. And in this period it was *always* a mere familiar talk, which of course might rise into dignity.

and swell into passion, but only in an informal way. The general feeling appears also to have been that dependence on the promised blessing of the Paraclete forbade elaborate preparation of discourses. And this feeling would prevent many from writing out their discourses after they were spoken, as the same feeling appears to have prevented the German Anabaptists of the sixteenth century, and many American Baptist ministers a century ago.

But we must by no means imagine there was but little preaching during the two first centuries, because no sermons remain. In fact preaching was then very general, almost universal, among the Christians. Lay-preaching was not an exception, it was the rule. Like the first disciples the Christians still went everywhere preaching the word. The notion that the Christian minister corresponded to the Old Testament *priest* had not yet gained the ascendency. We find Irenæus and Tertullian insisting that all Christians are priests. We learn from Eusebius (History VI. 19) that Origen, before he was ordained a presbyter, went to Palestine, and was invited by the bishops of Cæsarea

and Jerusalem to "expound the sacred Scriptures publicly in the church." The bishop of Alexandria, who was an enemy to Origen, condemned this, declaring it unheard of "that laymen should deliver discourses in the presence of the bishop." But the bishop of Jerusalem pronounced that notion a great mistake, appealing to various examples. It was still common in some regions, though now unknown in others, to invite laymen who could edify the brethren, to do so; and this even when sacerdotal feeling was growing strong.

In these first centuries, then, almost all the Christians preached. Thus, preaching was informal, and therefore unrecorded. Even of the presbyters at that time, few were educated or had much leisure for study. And when some able and scholarly man became a Christian, however he might occupy himself with profound studies, and the preparation of elaborate works, as Justin or Clement of Alexandria, Irenæus or Tertullian, yet when he stood up to preach, then like Faraday in the little Sandemanian chapel in London, he would lay his studies aside and speak impromptu, with the greatest simplicity.

It is a favorite and just idea of recent writers on history, that the historian should not confine himself, as was so long common, to men in high places, and to single great events, but should try to reproduce the life of the many, and the numerous forces affecting that life, and gradually preparing for the great events. This, however, can never be fully done, and the shortcoming is of necessity particularly great in the history of preaching. Yet let us at least *bear in mind* that the early progress of Christianity, that great and wonderful progress to which we still appeal as one of the proofs of its Divine origin, was due mainly to the labors of obscure men, who have left no sermons, and not even a name to history, but whose work remains plain before the all-seeing eye, and whose reward is sure. Hail, ye unknown, forgotten brethren! we celebrate the names of your leaders, but we will not forget that *you* fought the battles, and gained the victories. The Christian world feels your impress, though it has lost your names. And we likewise, if we cannot live in men's memories, will rejoice at the thought that if we work for God, our work shall live, and we too shall live in our work.

And not only are these early laborers *now* unknown, but most of them were in their own day little cared for by the great and the learned, most of them were uneducated. Throughout the first two or three centuries, it continued to be true that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called to be Christian ministers or Christians at all. It was mainly the foolish things, weak things, base things, that God chose. And what power they had through the story of the cross, illuminated by earnest Christian living! There is a famous passage of Chrysostom (Homily xix. on the Statues), in which he bestows generous and exuberant eulogy on the country preachers around Antioch, many of whom were present that day in his church. He says, in his high-wrought fashion, that their presence beautified the city and adorned the church, and describes them as different in dialect (for they were Syrians), but speaking the same language in respect of faith, a people free from cares, leading a sober and truly dignified life. He says they learn lessons of virtue and self-control, from tilling the soil. "You might see each of them now yoking oxen to the plough,

and cutting a deep furrow in the ground, at another time with their word cleaning out sins from men's souls. They are not ashamed of work, but ashamed of idleness, knowing that idleness is a teacher of all wickedness. And while the philosophers walk about with conspicuous cloak and staff and beard, these plain men are far truer philosophers, for they teach immortality and judgment to come, and conform all their life to these hopes, being instructed by the divine writings."

Not only in the first centuries, then, but in Chrysostom's day also, there were these uncultivated but good and useful men; and such preachers have abounded from that day to this, *in every period, country and persuasion in which Christianity was making any real and rapid progress.*

Our first period is divided from the second by the work of the celebrated Origen, probably A. D. 186—253. He was truly an epoch-making man, in Biblical learning, in ministerial education, and in homiletics. Everybody knows what an impetus he gave to Biblical learning. All Christian scholars in the next two centuries, and many in every sub-

sequent century, drew largely from the vast stores of learning gathered in his great works. The zealous studies of the present century in Text-criticism, present Origen as *facile princeps* among the Fathers in that respect, and give constantly new occasion to admire the scholarly accuracy and iron diligence of the Adamantine student. He was also the great educator among the early Christians. For nearly thirty years, beginning when a precocious youth of seventeen, he was chief Catechist in Alexandria, or as we should say, Theological professor, aided, after a time, by one of his distinguished pupils. And when banished from Alexandria, and living at Cæsarea in Palestine, he there taught as a private instructor, but with students from distant lands, and with great éclat, for about twenty years more. During a great part of this time, from youth to age, he also preached every day, while at the same time laboring over his varied and immense works, so large a portion of which have long ago perished. Some glimpse of the subjects and methods of study in his theological school, we shall be able to get before we close. He was not only a teacher of preachers, but also a teacher of teachers. He

had had predecessors in Alexandria, as Clement and his teacher Pantænus, but it was Origen that made the Alexandrian school the chief seat of Christian learning for many generations to come. And his private teaching at Cæsarea gave occasion for the founding of a public school there by the famous Pamphilus, the friend of Eusebius.

But in respect to methods of preaching also, <sup>I</sup> Origen made an epoch. As to interpretation of Scripture, he dignified and appeared to justify the practice of allegorizing. It is an utter mistake to say, though a mistake often repeated, that he was the *father* of this practice. His teacher, Clement, gives us instances of it; Justin Martyr has specimens as wild as anything in Origen, and the Epistle ascribed to Barnabas contains much allegorizing that seems to us absurd and contemptible. In fact, Origen's great master in this respect was Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, who was a contemporary of our Lord. Origen did but apply to the New Testament, and to the Old Testament in a Christian sense, those methods of allegorizing by which Philo had made the Old Testament teach Platonic and Stoic Philosophy. Celsus, the shrewd

and vigorous unbeliever, made it an objection that the New Testament did not admit of allegorizing. Origen resented this as a slander, adducing several passages in which Paul himself had used allegory, and doubtless feeling all the more called on to show by his own allegorical interpretations that the Christian books *did* have those deep allegorical meanings which the Jews claimed for their books, and the Greeks for theirs. Allegorizing had long been the rage at Alexandria. Porphyry pretended that Origen had only learned it from the Greek mysteries. Philo himself did but carry out more fully and ably the method of Aristobulus, his predecessor by a century and a half. Indeed, recent Egyptologists tell us that fifteen centuries before Christ, the Egyptian priests were disputing as to the true text, and allegorizing the statements, of their Book of the Dead, or Funeral Rites.

But while Origen by no means originated allegorizing, he did do much to recommend it, by presenting the striking, though delusive, theory, that as man is composed of body, soul and spirit, so Scripture has a threefold sense, the grammatical, the moral, and the spiritual, and also by actually

working out a spiritual sense for a great part of the Old and New Testaments, with perverse and absurd ingenuity. In this way he injured preaching. Men who held to a deep, esoteric sense, which only the <sup>few</sup> could understand, who, like the Gnostics, regarded themselves as a sort of spiritual aristocracy, would not only neglect to bring forth and apply the plain teachings of Scripture, but they habitually made light of these teachings, and cared mainly for such hearers as could soar with them into the "misty mid-regions" of allegorizing. Now it is very well as a general principle that we should preach with some reference to the wants of the highly cultivated, and should deal in profound thought, but after all it is the plain truths of Scripture that do the chief good, to cultivated as well as uncultivated. One who begins to regard himself as distinctively a preacher for the intellectual or the learned, will spoil his preaching as rapidly as possible.

At a later period, all Christians became accustomed to the methods of allegorizing, and it ceased for the most part to be an esoteric affair, and became almost universal, with the exception of

Chrysostom and his associates, in all the subsequent centuries till the Reformation.

But Origen did good in teaching men to bring out the grammatical and the moral sense, though he understood these. In his early youth a teacher of grammar and rhetoric, he had a feeling for language, an exegetical sense, and his homilies and other works form the first examples of any pains-taking explanation of Scripture, or approach to accurate exegesis.

II As to the form of Christian discourses, he first, so far as we know, made them discourses indeed, and not a mere string of loosely connected observations, dependent for their connection on accidental suggestion or the promptings of passion, and he first made series of homilies on entire books. This was a great advance, and prepared the way for future improvements. Yet still the homily was without unity of structure. Origen does not take the fundamental thought of the passage, and treat every verse in relation to that, but he just takes clause after clause as they come, and remarks upon them in succession. Not till a century later was this fault corrected, and only partially then. In fact

this lack of unity is still the commonest and gravest fault in ordinary attempts at expository preaching. But such feeling does not now prevail, and it is more hurtful now than formerly, for the modern mind demands unity in all discourse. If you would succeed in expository preaching, let every such sermon have a genuine and marked unity.

Origen's fame as a Biblical scholar, has overshadowed his merits as a preacher. And in general the exegetical element is more prominent in his homilies, than the oratorical. Yet he has occasional passages that are truly eloquent. ✓

Our second period of two centuries is from A. D. 230 to 430, or from Origen to Augustine. This again may be divided into two parts, for the year 330 will roughly represent to us the time of Constantine. Of the first half, from 230 to about 330, there is comparatively little to say, but the last of our four centuries is the time when Christian preaching springs into exuberant growth, and blossoms into glorious beauty.

From the time of Origen, a much more considerable portion of Christian ministers must have

been educated men, for there were now several theological schools, religious libraries began to be formed, sermons were taken down in short-hand and circulated, and (though the persecutions had not yet ended) there was an increasing number of intelligent people among the Christians, who would appreciate and desire an educated ministry. And yet almost no sermons of that period are now in existence.

The celebrated controversial writer Hippolytus, a contemporary of Origen, is said to have been very eloquent. One homily and some fragments now remaining, are represented as showing considerable oratorical skill. Gregory, afterwards called Thaumaturgus, to distinguish him from the famous Gregories of later times, was a pupil of Origen, and a most enthusiastic admirer. His panegyric on Origen, delivered when leaving the theological school, is a really eloquent production, possessing much curious interest. But the few extant homilies ascribed to him are not probably genuine. It is evident that many sermons must have been written down during this period. It may be that most of them perished during the great persecution under Diocletian, when so great an effort was made to destroy all

Christian writings. In the West, among the Latin-speaking Christians, we still find no sermons at all that have come down to modern times. Cyprian, in Carthage, while not an original thinker, but an avowed imitator of Tertullian, had yet very fine oratorical gifts, and spent his early life as a popular teacher of rhetoric. The style of his writings is very pleasing, but he left no sermons. Novatian, the heretic at Rome, (with whom some of our Baptist brethren are zealous to establish a denominational affinity,) is represented by Neander as "distinguished for clearness of Christian knowledge . . . and for a happy faculty of teaching," but the works now doubtfully ascribed to him, and even the list of his works given by Jerome, comprise no sermons.

*But now we approach a new period. The grand effort of Diocletian had failed, and it became evident that Christianity could not be destroyed by persecution. Constantine adopted Christianity as the main plank in his political platform. Being successful, becoming sole ruler of the world, and favoring the Christians in every way, he wrought*

a most sudden and complete change in their position, a change having the most varied and important results for that age and for the ages to come. Yea, all Christendom is agitated to-day, by the consequences of Constantine's grand stroke of policy. In no respect were the immediate results more important than in regard to *preaching*.

The young men who were looking to the ministry of the gospel could now without difficulty avail themselves of all the best *educational* facilities in the great University cities, before attending their Christian theological schools. They could now enjoy, not only undisturbed quiet in Christian life, study, and work, but the best *social* advantages. O the power for good or evil, in every age and country, of social position, and social influences. Before this time Christians could scarcely anywhere be received into the best society, and if thus received they would be frequently met by heathen customs in which all were expected to take part. But now fashionable society smiled on Christians, and greatly courted those who were influential. It became the fashion to attend church. It was a passport to imperial favor, that one should be a

very zealous Christian. And fashionable people in Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and hundreds of smaller towns, began to speak, (so Chrysostom intimates,) almost as enthusiastically about the favorite preacher of the hour, as they spoke of the favorite horse in the races, or the reigning actor of the theatre. The number of real Christians who were intelligent rapidly increased; and when to these was added the fashionable world, there arose a great demand for preachers who were literary, and eloquent. And if the preacher was a deeply pious man, his soul would be stirred by observing the crowds of professed Christians, many of whom had nothing of Christianity but the name, and he would <sup>3</sup> be moved to the most earnest and passionate warnings and appeals.

Besides, all Christendom was rent by the great Ar- <sup>5</sup> ian controversy. Now that the outside pressure of persecution was removed, the Christians would not hesitate to throw their whole soul into controversy. While a skeptical modern historian may sneer at a world-shaking dispute over one letter, the difference between *διοικεῖσθαι* and *διοικεῖσθαι*, yet such a subtle distinction was well suited to the genius of the Ori-

entalized Greeks, and Hellenized Orientals. And although the controversy was largely carried on by political manœuvring, and courting favor with successive Emperors, favorites and governors, still much might be, much often was accomplished by able and eloquent sermons on the various aspects of this great question as to the Divinity of Christ, which touched the very heart of Christianity, and could be so presented as mightily to stir the souls of all susceptible hearers. Many of the *Arian* preachers too, were very able, highly educated, acute in argument, and passionately earnest in advocating their ingenious and plausible theory. Such rivalry must have powerfully stimulated the orthodox preachers.

Moreover, Christian discourses could now be freely published, and widely circulated. Thus the sermons of the more eloquent preachers speedily became a model and a stimulus to other preachers everywhere, and also helped to create a demand for attractive and impressive discourse, on the part of such private Christians as read the publications.

These glimpses of the situation may give us some conception of the conditions under which Christian Preaching blazed out into such splendor, and such

**real power**, in the century which began with Constantine and Eusebius, and ended with Chrysostom and Augustine.

Eusebius himself, the justly famous historian, had in certain respects good gifts for preaching, and has left some homilies, besides his extravagant and overwrought panegyric on Constantine; but he occupied himself chiefly with his extensive historical and chronological studies and treatises.

From Athanasius, the great Trinitarian leader, we have no genuine homilies remaining. His style of writing has directness, simplicity, and native force, a vigorous and manly eloquence, such as one seldom meets with in that age of stilted rhetoric. Gregory Nazianzen, his eulogist, declares that Athanasius had no literary culture. But this is probably like Ben Jonson's saying that Shakspeare had small Latin and less Greek, because he had not been a life-long student like himself. It is, however, worth notice that in his two remarkable treatises on the Incarnation, written in all probability when he was between twenty and twenty-five years old, Athanasius shows the same excellencies of style as in his later works, which seems to prove that these excellencies

were mainly native. I think that the more Athanasius is read, the more it will be regretted that he has left us no sermons.

As to Cyril of Jerusalem, it must suffice to remark, that his well-known sermons to those about to be baptized, and to those recently baptized, while not of remarkable ability, are suggestive examples of a practice which, with due modifications, might with great advantage be more largely pursued among us.

The name of Ephraem the Syrian, who died in 378 (five years after Athanasius), has in a singular manner become familiar to all of us, though we may not have looked at his works. A MS. of the New Testament, written in the fifth century, was about the twelfth century written over with some works translated from Ephraem, and is now known to critics of the Text as the MS. C, or the Codex of Ephraem the Syrian. His is the great name among the Syrian Christians, and he is represented as one of the leading Christian orators of the century of which we are speaking. As a rare peculiarity among those great preachers, he was what we call a self-made man. Yet like all such men who really accomplish much, he was educated by the ideas and influences of the

age, by books, and by personal contact with gifted contemporaries. He knew little Greek, yet enough to correspond freely with Basil the Great. I have never yet found opportunity to read much of his writings, but I notice that he is very highly eulogized by Villemain, and described, by him and others, as a highly *emotional* preacher, sometimes intensely solemn. The portions I have read also show a truly Oriental fondness for imagery. He was at the same time a poet, the earliest Syriac hymns being from his pen.

Shall we give a moment to *Macarius*, the Egyptian monk? His homilies are without text, desultory, familiar talks to the monks, and often to a considerable extent made up of answers to questions which they ask, thus being literally *homilies*. They are crazy with allegorizing, and wild with mysticism, but very sweet and engaging in tone, and urging to all the monastic virtues, prayer, silence, humility and self-mortification, in a very impressive manner. Certainly monasticism was a sadly one-sided thing, but its one side of Christianity has been beautifully exhibited by some of the earlier and medieval monks, both in precept and example. Are we not inclined to be one-sided too, caring only for thought and

practical activity, and neglecting the cultivation of religious sensibility, and of the passive virtues? It would do most of us good to read some of the best of the early monastic writers, as every body agrees is true of the 'Imitation of Christ,' and the medieval Latin Hymns.

I must mention one other of the less famous preachers of the time, one scarcely ever mentioned in works of Church History—for we know almost nothing of his life, and his sermons take little part in the great controversies—but who deserves a very warm commendation. It is Asterius, bishop of Amasea in Pontus. Of his copious writings, we have left about ten homilies believed to be genuine, and some fragments of others, but these are admirable, some of them really charming. The subjects are moral or historical; he has fine descriptive powers; the style is marked by exquisite richness of expression, and not overwrought. His allusions show that he was familiar with Demosthenes, and his style has something of the classic moderation and true elegance. Some of his sermons could be preached in our churches with little alteration, and would be well received. If some one of you would

make himself thoroughly acquainted with them, and publish them in a small volume with introductions and notes, I am persuaded that many persons would read them with interest, partly because the name is unknown, and the volume would awaken curiosity.

And now how can I speak of the great Greek preachers?

Basil the Great (A. D. 329—379) possessed all possible advantages. His family was rich and of high social position in Pontus, and from his grandparents down had been remarkable for piety. Two of his brothers became bishops, one of them famous (Gregory of Nyssa); and his older sister, who powerfully influenced him, founded and presided over a monastery. His father, a distinguished rhetorician, gave him careful instruction from childhood. At school he surpassed all his fellow-pupils. Then he studied at Constantinople, taught by Libanius, the most famous teacher of rhetoric in that age, with whom he formed a lasting friendship. Afterwards he went to Athens, where his fellow-students included Julian (afterwards Emperor and Apostate),

and Gregory Nazianzen, his early friend. Gregory tells us in a well-known funeral eulogium,\* that when he heard Basil was coming to Athens, he gave the students so high an opinion of his abilities and eloquence, that they consented, as a special distinction, to exempt Basil from the species of *hazing* to which new students were always subjected.

Thus he had every advantage,—good-breeding, and all pious and inspiring home influences, careful early training, then life in the great capital city (giving knowledge of the world), and afterwards at the chief seat of learning in that age, Athens, with the ablest instructors and the most gifted fellow students—his intellect disciplined, and his taste cultivated by the study of classic philosophy and oratory, and yet his Christian feeling ever warmed anew by the sympathy and example of his intelligent and devout kindred at home.

He died when less than fifty years old (like the English Dr. Barrow), but his life was crowded with religious and literary labors.

As a preacher, Basil shows greater skill in the construction of discourses than any Christian ora-

\* Gregory Nazianzen Or. 43, page 781-3 Bened.

tor who had preceded him. He usually extemporeized, but he knew how to put a sermon together, or to make it grow, in a natural manner. The chief excellency of his preaching is in the treatment of moral subjects. He had a rare knowledge of human nature, and you may notice that among all the changes of preaching in all the ages, two branches of knowledge possess a universal and indestructible interest, deep knowledge of human nature, and deep knowledge of Scripture. Basil shows wonderful power in depicting the various virtues, and still more remarkable skill in tracing the growth and consequences of leading vices. Amid all the admirable temperance literature of our own age, I have seen no more just and vivid exhibition of many of the evils of drunkenness, than is given by Basil in his sermon on that subject. Yet this and some others of his discourses seem to me to have a fault still common in sermons on moral subjects, viz., that they do not make sufficiently prominent the Gospel view of the evil, and the Gospel motives to avoid it. [The Christian moralist should be a *Christian moralist*.] It is not strange that Basil's old pagan instructor could enjoy this sermon on drunkenness

If the letters \* between them on the occasion are genuine (and they possess great verisimilitude), we find that they praise each other in very extravagant terms. Libanius sends Basil an oration on *the ill-humored man*, of which Basil says in reply, "O Muses, and letters, and Athens, what gifts ye bestow upon your lovers." Then Libanius asks to see Basil's recent sermon on drunkenness, and having read it, says, "Surely, Basil, you live at Athens unawares, for the Cæsarea people (Basil was bishop of Cæsarea in Pontus) could not hear this discourse." Presently he adds, "I did not teach him. This man is Homer, yes Plato, yes Aristotle, yes Susarion, who knew everything." . . . And in conclusion. "I would, O Basil, that you could give me such praises," etc. Compliments between a professor and his now famous and very grateful pupil are apt to be a trifle gushing, but in this case the thing does seem overdone.

Basil's style has the faults of his age, and I would not advise your reading him very rapidly or freely, lest your taste be offended; but taking just one discourse at a time, you feel that you are dealing with

\* Basil, Epistles 351—6, p. 1093 ff. M'gne.

a great mind, a noble character, a deeply devout and truly eloquent preacher.

Gregory of Nyssa, the brother of Basil, is among the Greek Fathers the profoundest thinker as to *philosophy*, as you may see brought out in Ueberweg's History of Philosophy. As a preacher, he was and is overshadowed by the fame of his brother and of his namesake, but so far as a slender acquaintance enables one to judge, I think him really a more satisfactory preacher than the other and more celebrated Gregory.

This other, Gregory Nazianzen (A. D. 329-389), the friend and fellow student of Basil, was doubtless at that time considered the most eloquent of all preachers until Chrysostom became known. Very ambitious, and enjoying the finest educational opportunities, Gregory was especially a student of eloquence, and was a man of imaginative and passionate nature. He was the first great hymn-writer; and his hymns became exceedingly popular in the Greek Church. Yet it has been justly said that his poetry is too oratorical, and his oratory too poetical. You may notice that few great preachers have written even a single good hymn, and no great hymn-writer has been

very eminent as a preacher, unless Gregory be the exception, or Ephraem the Syrian. So more generally as to oratory and poetry. The oratorical and the poetic temperament seem closely related, yet are they remarkably distinct. An orator may derive very great benefit from studying poets, but many a preacher is damaged by failing to understand the difference between the poet's office and his own. *Imagination* is the poet's mistress, his queen ; for the orator, she is a handmaid, highly useful, indeed absolutely needful, but only a handmaid. And *splendor of diction*, which for the poet is one chief end, is for the orator only a subordinate means.

But the very faults of Gregory's style, according to our taste, were high excellencies in the estimation of his contemporaries. His wildly extravagant hyperboles, perpetual effort to strike, and high-wrought splendor of imagery and diction, were accounted the most magnificent eloquence, and perhaps did really recommend the truth to some of his hearers. Thus while Patriarch of Constantinople, he preached five discourses (still extant), which are said to have done much in curing Arianism there, and which procured him the surname of *Theologos*, discourser on the

Deity of Christ, but which you or I can scarcely read with any patience. ↴

The career of John, afterward surnamed Chrysostom (A. D. 347-407), is doubtless somewhat familiar to you all, and is exceedingly well depicted in the life by Stephens. He was younger, by fifteen or twenty years, than Basil and the Gregories. He was of a distinguished and wealthy family in Antioch, and under the devoted care of a widowed mother, received every possible educational advantage. The great teacher Libanius had now returned to his native Antioch, and found in John a favorite pupil, whom he would have wished to make his successor as professor of rhetoric and kindred subjects. In the great city John saw the world, and sharpened that (penetrating knowledge of human nature for which), like Basil, he was remarkable. For a short time he practiced law, and Libanius warmly commended some of his speeches at the bar. But he turned away, weary and disgusted, from the thousand corruptions of society and government, and when his mother's death allowed he went into retirement with several friends, and

spent several years in the close study of the Scriptures. Among other and greater results, it is said that Chrysostom knew almost the whole Bible by heart. In these studies they were directed by Diodorus, the head of a neighboring monastery, and afterwards a bishop, and author of long famous commentaries and other works. Here was a turning-point of Chrysostom's life. Diodorus, as we learn from various sources, founded what then appeared to be a new school of Biblical interpretation, a reaction from the well-known tendency of the older school of Alexandria. He shrank from allegorizing, and held closely to "the literal and historical meaning of the text." His copious writings, which had the honor to be specially attacked by the Emperor Julian, have perished, except a few fragments. But Diodorus lives forever in his theological pupil. It is among the greatest distinctions of Chrysostom, that his interpretation is almost entirely free from the wild allegorizing which had been nearly universal ever since Origen. It is a delightful contrast to turn from the other great preachers of the time (including Augustine), with their utterly loose interpretations, and fanciful

spiritualizing, to the straight-forward, careful and usually sober interpretations of Chrysostom. His works are not only models of eloquence, but a treasury of exegesis. And for this the world is mainly indebted to Diodorus. Chrysostom had much native good sense, it is true, but so had Athanasius, Basil, Augustine. Nay, his early studies of Scripture were *directed* by a really wise and able instructor; and his good sense enabled him to seize the just principles of interpretation set before him, and to develop them still more ably, and recommend them far more widely than the instructor himself. Highly favored was such a student, and highly fortunate such a teacher. It is also believed (Förster) that Chrysostom was greatly influenced as to interpretation, by his fellow student, Theodore, known afterwards as Theodore of Mopsuestia, and a commentator of great ability. It is among the advantages of study in company with others, that a man of susceptible nature will be powerfully influenced by his associates, as well as by the instructors.

Chrysostom long shrank from the work of preaching, and the office of priest, the difficulties and responsibilities of which he has so impressively

stated in his little work on the Priesthood. He wrote this and other valuable works while holding inferior offices, but was ordained and began preaching, only at the age of thirty-nine. He died at sixty, after three years of exile. Thus his actual career as a preacher lasted only eighteen years, twelve years at Antioch, and six at Constantinople. In these years he preached almost daily, filling the civilized world with his fame, and leaving about one thousand sermons (many of them reported by others) that have descended to us. From no other preacher have one thousand sermons been published, except Spurgeon, who has now gone considerably beyond that number. In our impatient age and country, when so many think time spent in preparation is time lost, it is well to remember that the two most celebrated preachers of the early Christian centuries began to preach, Chrysostom at thirty-nine, and Augustine at thirty-six.

I cannot fully discuss the characteristics of Chrysostom's preaching. It must be admitted that he is by no means always correct in his interpretations, particularly in the Old Testament, being ignorant of Hebrew, and often misled by the errors of the

Septuagint ; also that he shared many sad errors of his age, as to baptism and the Lord's Supper, asceticism and virginity, saints and martyrs. It must also be conceded that his style often wearies us by excessive copiousness, minute and long-drawn descriptions, multiplied comparisons, and piled-up imagery. But we must always remember that this did not look to excited throngs as it does to us. Under such circumstances a certain rhetorical exaggeration and exuberance seems natural, as a statue placed high upon a pillar must be above life-size.

But admit what you please, criticise as you please, and the fact remains that Chrysostom has never had a superior, and it may be gravely doubted whether he has had an equal, in the history of preaching. "He shared the faults of his age," you say. Yes, and a man who does not, will scarcely impress his age, or any other. "He does not show such consummate art as Demosthenes." That is true. But the finish and repose of high art is scarcely possible, and scarcely desirable, in addressing the preacher's heterogeneous audiences, comprising persons so different as to culture and interest in the subject. Demosthenes has everywhere a style as elegant and

purely simple as the *Venus dei Medici* or the *Parthenon*; Chrysostom approaches in exuberance of fancy, in multiplication of images and illustrations, and in curiously varied repetitions, to a Gothic cathedral. Demosthenes is like the Greek Tragic Drama, strictly conformed to the three Unities; Chrysostom is more like the Romantic Drama. I cannot say like Shakspeare — the Shakspeare of preachers has not yet appeared. But why should he not some day appear? One who can touch every chord of human feeling, treat every interest of human life, draw illustration from every object and relation of the known universe, and use all to gain acceptance and obedience for the gospel of salvation. No preacher has ever come nearer this than Chrysostom, perhaps none, on the whole, so near. A *Syrian* Greek, and a *Christian* Greek, he does in no small measure combine the Asiatic and the European, the ancient and the modern. The rich fancy and blazing passion of an Asiatic is united with the power of intellect and energy of will which mark Europeans; while the finish and simplicity of Greek art are not so much wanting as lost in the manysidedness of Christian thought and Christian

sentiment. As to style he certainly ranges the whole gamut of expression : for while his style is generally elevated, often magnificent, and sometimes extravagant, it occasionally becomes homely and rough as he lays bare the follies and vices of men.\* Chrysostom is undoubtedly the prince of *expository* preachers. And he has very rarely been equalled in the treatment of *moral* subjects, while two of the most successful preachers on moral subjects in the modern centuries, viz., Bourdaloue and Barrow, were both devoted students of Chrysostom.

Among the *Latin* preachers of the period there are but two great names, Ambrose and Augustine (for their famous contemporary Jerome, though eloquent in his writings, never preached).

Of Ambrose (A. D. 340-97,) I can say but a word. Of very distinguished family, carefully educated at Rome, he practised law at Milan with much éclat for eloquence, became civil governor there,

\* “The orator must command the whole scale of the language, from the most eloquent to the most low and vile. . . . The street must be one of his schools. Ought not the scholar to be able to convey his meaning in terms as short and strong as the porter or truckman uses to convey his? —*Emerson's Letters and Social Aims.*

and then in a curious and well-known fashion, was suddenly forced by the *vox populi* into the office of bishop. Aware of his ignorance of Christian truth, he diligently studied Origen, Hippolytus, and Basil the Great, and Philo the Jew. From these he learned the wildest allegorizing, and from them is said to have in fact derived the greater part of his thought. This borrowing from the Greeks by wholesale had been the general practice of *Pagan* Roman writers also, as everybody knows. Ambrose must have been a man of striking appearance, and his style is fine and flowing, which fact must have been the excuse for naming him the *Christian Cicero*, which seems to me extravagant praise. But the influence of his preaching was greatly increased by his administrative talent. A true Roman, a born ruler of men, he made himself felt by emperor and people, by his own and by subsequent ages. He was a man of noble character, and his hymns (the first Latin hymns of much importance) have a manly vigor and directness which are truly Roman. His character and administrative achievements, and his eloquent delivery, gave prestige to his writings, which would otherwise hardly have gained so great a

reputation. But here is a lesson for preachers, who may so often add immensely to the influence of their preaching, whether it be good or not, by administrative tact and toil, and by personal dignity and worth.

As to Augustine (A. D. 354-430,) you know that he has mainly impressed himself on the world as a theologian. The great theological authority of the Middle Ages, and nominally though one can hardly think really the great authority of the Romish Church to the present day, he is also the father of the theology of the Protestant Reformation. Luther avowedly put Augustine next to the Bible, as his chief source of religious knowledge. Calvin reduced Augustine's doctrines to a religious form, aided by his own training in the scholastic works of the Middle Ages. What we call Calvinism is the doctrine of Paul, developed by Augustine and systematized by Calvin.

You know too that Augustine has written works of very high *literary* merit, apart from his theological and homiletical writings. His Confessions form one of the most unique and strangely impressive works in all literature—one of the books that

every body ought by all means to read. His *City of God* has been called a “prose Epic,” and is a combination of history, philosophy and poetry that has a power and a charm all its own. Add that his work on *Christian Teaching* is the first treatise on Sacred Rhetoric and Homiletics, and after all that has followed, the last of its four books is still highly suggestive.

But I think that if we had nothing else from Augustine than his *Sermons*, of which some three hundred and sixty remain that are reckoned genuine, we should recognize him as a great preacher, as a richly gifted man, and should feel ourselves powerfully attracted and impressed by his genius, his mighty will and passionate heart and deeply earnest piety. Our historian *Paniel*, in my opinion, wrongs Augustine by underestimating him as a preacher, because of bitter hostility to the doctrines of grace which Augustine taught. Brömel does him more justice, and Ebert. He is unsafe as an interpreter—a good many of the great theologians have been rather too independent in their exegesis—and wild with allegorizing, like every other great preacher of the age except Chrysostom.

tom. But his sermons are full of power. He carefully, if not always correctly, *explains* his text, and *repeats* many times, in different ways, its substantial meaning. He deals much in dramatic question and answer, and in apostrophe; also in digression, the use of familiar phrases, direct address to particular classes of persons present—using in general great and notable *freedom*. Away with our prim and starch formalities and uniformities! Yet freedom must be controlled, as in Augustine it commonly is controlled, by sound judgment, right feeling and good taste.

The chief peculiarity of Augustine's *style* is his fondness for, and skill in producing, pithy phrases. In the terse and vigorous Latin, these often have great power. The capacity for throwing off such phrases is mainly natural, but may be indefinitely cultivated. And it is a great element of power, especially in addressing the masses of men, if one can, after stating some truth, condense it into a single keen phrase that will penetrate the hearer's mind and stick.

Hurried as this review has been, I have passed without mention a number of men who are more

or less known to us as eminent preachers. An interesting topic for inquiry would be, Preaching among the early *heretics*. The enthusiastic Montanism which won over Tertullian in his prime, must have produced impassioned and stirring preachers. The Manichæism to which Augustine was so attached in his youth, was in some respects well suited to eloquence; and Augustine declares that Faustus the Manichæan was more eloquent than Ambrose, whom he greatly admired and loved. I do not know anything as to the *Donatist* preachers, but the mighty *Arian* party, it has been already intimated, comprised preachers as well as scholars of great ability, from most of whom, however, nothing remains but a name.

I wish now to remark upon two or three of the many points of general instruction and suggestion which present themselves in connection with the preaching of the early Christian centuries.

1. As to entrance on the ministry. You have noticed that quite a number of the famous men who have passed rapidly before us, became presbyters or bishops against their will. *E. g.*, Gregory Thau-

maturgus (the pupil of Origen), and Gregory Nazianzen, who fled from ordination, and published an Apology for his flight, in which he set forth the responsible and difficult duties of the priesthood. So Chrysostom's beautiful treatise on the Priesthood was written to show why he was not willing to become a priest. Ambrose also, and Augustine entered the sacred office unwillingly, and many others that we know of. Partly this was due to sacerdotal notions, as implied in the very name they used, priesthood; partly it was a mere fashion; but in the main we must believe that these men honestly shrank from a calling so solemnly responsible, as many others have done in every age, including our own. Nay, we remember the saying of Paul, "Who is sufficient for these things?" and the consolation he has handed down to us, "Our sufficiency is of God."

You doubtless observed also how many of these foremost preachers were of families having a *high social position*, as Ephraem, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Ambrose and Augustine. This gives a preacher advantages of no slight importance, and we should not allow our more favored families

to suppose that the ministry is to come only from the poor. Everybody notices too, the pious mothers of Gregory Nazianzen and Chrysostom, of Ambrose and Augustine, while in the case of Basil and his brother, the whole family were remarkable for piety, beginning with the grandparents.

2. As to Education, we have seen that after Constantine, in the blooming period of early Christian eloquence, these distinguished preachers had nearly all attended at the great centres of *secular* instruction, gaining the most thorough general education the age could afford. The pagan thought and taste had greatly degenerated, but the noble old Greek and Roman literature then existed in its entirety (not in fragments as we have it), and came to these students in their own tongues wherein they were born. Mr. Grote, in the preface to his *Plato*, very unfairly quotes Jerome to show that it was the tendency of what he calls “Hebrew studies” to make a man despise and neglect the heathen classics. But Jerome had peculiar notions on this subject. Basil recommended the classic writers to a student, and Chrysostom and Augustine speak not so much as loving these writers less, but as

loving the Scriptures more. Besides, their circumstances were very different from ours. We can admire the statues of deities, without thereby encouraging idolatry, but they could not; and so as to the pagan literature, almost all intimately associated with idolatry, which was then rapidly declining, but by no means dead. These considerations will account for the terms of disparagement in which the great Christian writers of the time sometimes speak of classical studies. But Julian, the apostate emperor, doubtless understood the situation, and he *forbade* Christian teachers to teach rhetoric and grammar, and to lecture on the old classic authors. If Christian youth wished to study these, let them go, he said, to the pagan teachers. And we are told of distinguished Christian professors of rhetoric who gave up their positions, in obedience to Julian's edict.

We have also seen that a singularly large number of these great preachers had studied the grand systems of Greek and Roman law, which must have given most important general discipline. Tertullian, Cyprian and Ambrose, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Basil and Chrysostom, all studied law, and most of

them for a while engaged in the practice. The same thing has been true of many eminent preachers in our own time. Let me remind you, too, of the great attention which nearly every one of these great preachers had paid to the study of *Oratory*, as a practical art. I will not discourse upon the importance to ourselves of this now so generally neglected study. I trust you all read the weighty words spoken last summer at Amherst College by an illustrious citizen, whose name recalls the whole history of American Liberty, and whose character and public services are worthy of the best days of the Republic, the Hon. Charles Francis Adams. He declared that in no country at the present day has public speaking such ample opportunities for exerting influence as in America, and in no civilized country is the art of public speaking so little studied. (I think that in this last respect he ought to have excepted England.) I would that his exhortations on that subject might sink into the hearts of our aspiring American youth.

But besides general education, in all the really grand curriculum of the age, and at the great schools of Alexandria and Antioch, of Constantinople and

Athens, of Rome and many lesser cities, these leading preachers nearly all pursued a long course of *theological* study, before entering upon the full work of the ministry. Going back to the times of Origen, we happen to have remaining a curious account of the studies in which he trained his pupils at Cæsarea. Gregory, afterwards surnamed Thaumaturgus (the miracle-worker), on his way from Cappadocia to a law-school at Beyrouth, met Origen at Cæsarea, was converted by him to Christianity, and became his pupil there for eight years, though he had already studied at Alexandria and at Athens. When at last reluctantly leaving Cæsarea, Gregory delivered a valedictory, commonly known as his Panegyric upon Origen, which is very interesting on many accounts, among others because it is the earliest Christian *oration* we have.

He tells in this valedictory how Origen at the outset urged upon him in many conversations, the advantages and delights of knowledge, as compared with what men call practical pursuits, and soon fascinated him so that he could not leave. He says that he and his brother were like uncultivated land full of briers and thistles, or like wild horses,

when Origen took hold of them. That he taught them both in the Socratic manner and by discourses—that he corrected their errors, and taught them to distinguish between truth and error, to be critical both as to language and arguments. The subjects of their study, he says, were Physics (in the broad ancient sense of that term), especially Geometry, which he calls the solid basis of all knowledge, and Astronomy; afterwards Ethics, Philosophy in general, and Theology. Such was their eight years' course. And now in sadly turning away from this worshipped teacher and these cherished studies, Gregory compares himself to Adam driven out of Paradise, to the prodigal son leaving his father (only without any portion of goods), and to the Jews when carried into the Babylonian captivity. Do we mourn thus in leaving a long course of study? If not, is it because our teachers are not Origens, or because we are not Gregories—or is it that our students do not commonly expect to be life-long celibates, and that thoughts of a domestic Paradise do often allure them away from the Paradise of College and Theological school?

In respect to their *style*, the great Greek and

Latin Fathers are, in general, by no means good models, as I have before intimated in passing. They have the overwrought style of their age. We see this already in Josephus, and Plutarch's Miscellaneous Writings, and the Dialogue on Oratory ascribed to Tacitus. We see it in Libanius and Julian. Even Chrysostom shows this tendency of his age, and often offends our taste. Here is a reason, from the point of view of *Rhetoric*, for objecting to the substitution of Christian Greek and Latin writers for the classics of the earlier time as text-books. Boys at school and college are always disappointed in Demosthenes at first, and they would think Gregory Nazianzen far more eloquent. These writers present precisely those *faults* of style which youthful and untrained minds are too ready to admire and imitate.

Passing over many other topics, I simply direct your attention, in conclusion, to the striking fact, that the Christian preaching of these early centuries culminated in Chrysostom and Augustine, and then suddenly and entirely ceased to show any remarkable power. East or West, after Chrysostom and Augustine, there is not another really great

preacher whose sermons remain to us, for seven centuries. The reasons for this would appear upon a little reflection. In the East, the despotism and worldliness of the Imperial Court left no room for independence of thought, or for high hope of doing good by eloquence. Court intrigue had forced Gregory Nazianzen to resign at Constantinople, and driven Chrysostom into exile, and the Greek bishops afterwards became mere courtiers or mere slaves. In the *West*, amid the destruction of the Western Empire, and the conflicts of the barbarians, the Roman genius for *government* showed itself, and the high Christian officials went on gathering power and making Rome in a new sense the mistress of the world, but this was done by administrative talents like those of Leo the Great, and Gregory the Great, and there was no demand for supreme efforts in preaching. And in both East and West, men's minds were now turned towards impressive ritual, sacerdotal functions and sacramental efficacies, and these left little room, as they commonly do, for earnest and vigorous preaching.

## LECTURE III.

### MEDIEVAL AND REFORMATION PREACHING

IT is a great mistake, in surveying the history of Preaching, to pass at once from Chrysostom and Augustine to the Reformation. Besides the fact, now so generally recognized, that there were “Reformers before the Reformation,” it is to be noticed that among the devoted Romanists of the Middle Ages there were some earnest, able and eloquent preachers. The common Protestant fashion of stigmatizing the “Dark Ages” is unphilosophical and unjust, and has proven, in some quarters, to be bad policy. Men who had been reared to think that everything Medieval was corrupt or silly, are sometimes so surprised by the first results of a little investigation that they go quite over to the opposite extreme.

But not simply on grounds of general justice and fairness are we required to notice the Medieval preaching. The fact is that the history of preach-

ing cannot be understood without taking account of that period. So far as the *form* of modern preaching differs from that of the early Christian centuries, the difference has had its origin in the Middle Ages.

It is true that in that period preaching was generally very much neglected. Over wide districts, and through long years at a time, there would be almost no preaching. When men assembled in churches it was only to witness ceremonies and hear chanting and intoning. If sermons were given, it was in many countries still the custom to preach only in Latin, which the people did not now understand, even in Southern Europe. Those who preached in the vernacular, would often give nothing but eulogies on the saints, accounts of current miracles, etc. Most of the lower clergy were grossly ignorant, and many of them grossly irreligious, while the bishops and other dignitaries were often engrossed with political administration or manœuvring, perhaps busy in war, if not occupied with pursuits still more unclerical and unchristian.

All this was true. And yet there were notable exceptions. Let us look for a moment at three or four leading examples.

Certainly Peter the Hermit was a great preacher. A man of very small stature and ungainly shape, his speaking was rendered powerful by fiery enthusiasm, and great flow of words. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance to an orator, of vigorous *health*; and yet several of the greatest preachers have been men in feeble health, as, besides Peter the Hermit, Chrysostom, St. Bernard, Calvin, Baxter—yea, apparently, the apostle Paul. But note that their diseases were not such as debilitate, not such as enfeeble the nervous system—that they were all capable of great mental application, and possessed great force of character, stimulated by burning zeal—and that most of them, though diligent students, were also much given to physical activity. In the time of Peter and Bernard, a feeble physique, especially if it appeared to be emaciated by fasting, rather helped a preacher's oratory with the people; for *first*, it seemed to indicate great piety, and *secondly*, his powerful utterance when excited seemed in that superstitious age to be preternatural. The Hon. Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, is in this respect an anachronism—if he had lived in the Middle Ages the fact that so frail a man can speak two

hours and hold a great audience would have stamped him as a saint, preternaturally supported, and with more than human claims to attention and belief.

Peter had a most inspiring theme ; for with the great religious motive he united an appeal to the love of war, which was so strong in that age, and to the love of adventure, which is always so strong. But in addition to the inspiration of his theme, he himself must have been surpassingly eloquent. We are told (Michaud I, 43) that he made much use of “those vehement apostrophes which produce such an effect upon an uncultivated multitude. He described the profanation of the holy places, and the blood of the Christians shed in torrents in the streets of Jerusalem. He invoked, by turns, Heaven, the saints, the angels, to bear witness to the truth of what he told them. He apostrophized Mt. Zion, the rock of Calvary, and the Mount of Olives, which he made to resound with sobs and groans. When he had exhausted speech in painting the miseries of the faithful, he showed the spectators the crucifix which he carried with him ; sometimes striking his breast and wounding his flesh, sometimes shedding torrents of tears.” Fanatical, no doubt he was, but

our present concern is with his eloquence. Read, with this in view, the story of his preaching, and of the prodigious effects produced upon high and low, upon men, women and children, and you will probably believe that seldom, in all the history of man, has there been such overpowering popular eloquence as that of Peter. And while we are rejoicing to study the recorded and finished eloquence of Demosthenes and Daniel Webster, of Chrysostom and Robert Hall, we have also much to learn from the mere history of great popular orators like Patrick Henry and Peter the Hermit.

But the case of the great Crusading Evangelist was very peculiar. We find a little later a notable example of preaching in the strict sense of the term.

Bernard of Clairvaux, commonly called St. Bernard, lived from A. D. 1091 to 1153 in France, a devoted monk and a fervently pious man. Pale, meagre, attenuated through much fasting, looking almost as unsubstantial as a spirit, he made a great impression the moment he was seen. He possessed extraordinary talents, and though he made light of human learning, he at least did so only after acquiring

it. His sermons and other writings do not indicate a profound metaphysical thinker, like Augustine or Aquinas, but they present treasures of devout *sentiment*, pure, deep, delightful—mysticism at its best estate. His style has an elegant simplicity and sweetness that is charming, and while many of his expressions are as striking as those of Augustine, they seem perfectly easy and natural. His utterance and gesture are described as in the highest degree impressive. His power of persuasion was felt by high and low to be something irresistible. Even his letters swayed popes and sovereigns. This wonderful personal influence was shown in many cures, which he and others believed to be miraculous.

Bernard is often called “the last of the Fathers.” If we were asked who is the foremost preacher in the whole history of *Latin* Christianity, we should doubtless find the question narrowing itself to a choice between Augustine and Bernard. His sermons show more careful preparation than those of the early Latin Fathers. He has felt to some extent the systematizing tendencies of the scholastic thought and method—for Anselm’s principal works appeared before Bernard was born, and Abelard was his

senior by a dozen years—and the effect of this systematizing tendency we see in the more orderly arrangement of his discourses, though they do not show formal divisions. He greatly loved to preach, and we are told that he preached oftener than the rules of his order appointed, both to the monks and to the people. He was accustomed to put down thoughts, and schemes of discourses, as they occurred to him, and work them up as he had occasion to preach—a plan which many other preachers have found useful. His methods of sermonizing have considerable variety, and his manner of treatment is free. I need not say that he was devoted to allegorizing, which was universal in that age. I count in his works eighty-six sermons on the Song of Solomon, and when the series was cut short by his death, he had just begun the third chapter. In his other sermons too he quotes the Song of Solomon as often as Chrysostom quotes Job. Before we speak lightly of this passionate love for Solomon's Song by mediæval monks, as some Protestants do speak, it may be well to remember that Richard Baxter and Jonathan Edwards studied that book with peculiar delight.

Bernard was warmly praised by Luther, Melanc-

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thon and Calvin. I think that beyond any other medieval preacher, he will repay the student of the present day.

About fifty years after the death of Bernard, *i. e.* in the beginning of the thirteenth century, two new monastic orders were founded, the mendicant orders of Franciscans and Dominicans. The latter order was founded for the express purpose of *preaching*. And it is instructive to notice that the immediate occasion of its establishment was the observed popularity and power of preaching among the Waldenses. Besides settled preachers, Peter Waldo had recently begun to send out Evangelists, two by two, who were known as the "Poor Men of Lyons." Dominic began his order to meet these heretics just as Protestantism afterwards led to the Society of Jesus. But in a few years Dominic went to Rome, and preached there with irresistible eloquence, drawing the highest dignitaries to sympathize with his plans. All men could see that preaching was everywhere greatly needed, and the idea of a general order of preachers, to be controlled by the eloquent Dominic, was welcomed, so that Rome now became its centre. Within a few years

this order embraced four hundred and seventy different monasteries, in every country of Europe, and spreading into Asia, making probably twenty thousand travelling preachers. In the course of time the Dominicans became worldly, and less zealous in this great work. But for two or three generations this mighty order of "Evangelists," as we should say, made the Christian world ring with their preaching. They formed also a singular and very influential outside order of laymen, called Tertiaries, who were bound by their vow to entertain the wandering preachers, to spread the fame of their eloquence, crowd to hear them, and "applaud, at least by rapt attention." You perceive that several things have been understood in the world before our day.

The Franciscans addressed themselves especially to Foreign Mission work among the Mohammedans of Spain, Africa and the East, but also comprised many zealous preachers at home. To these two orders belonged the other two great medieval preachers of whom I shall speak, Antony of Padua being a Franciscan, and Thomas Aquinas a Dominican.

**Antony, a Portuguese, and a Franciscan mis-**

sionary to Africa, afterwards came to Italy, where he gained his extraordinary reputation as a preacher, and died in 1231, at the age of thirty-seven. He is reckoned by some as the most *popular* preacher that ever lived. We read of twenty thousand persons as crowding at night around the stand where he was to preach next morning, and after the sermon making bonfires of their playing cards, etc.; and sometimes as many as thirty thousand were present when he preached. In point of mere numbers, this surpasses Chrysostom, Whitefield, Spurgeon and Moody. Yet much of this popularity on the part of Antony of Padua was due to the superstitious belief that he had supernatural power, that he could work miracles. We are told, for instance, that once he preached to the *fishes*, “giving them in conclusion the apostolical benediction, and behold ! they showed their joy by lively movement of tail and fins, and raised their heads above the water, bowed reverently and went under. At this unbelievers were astonished, and the most dreadful heretics were converted.”\*

Yet these superstitious follies must not prevent our observing that he was really a great preacher

\* Lentz, i, p. 229.

and some things in his manner of preaching are particularly noteworthy.

(1) Antony of Padua was the first preacher, so far as I can learn, who made a careful division of his sermons into several heads—which his extant sermons show that he commonly did, though not universally. For example, on the text, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord,” Apocal. xiv., he begins thus: “Note that in these words death is described, about which the apostle John proposes three things, viz., *the debt of nature*, where he says, ‘The dead’; *the merit of grace*, where he says, ‘Who die in the Lord’; *the reward of glory*, where he says, ‘Blessed.’ . . . “Likewise note that God gives us three things, viz. to live, to live well, to live forever. For in creation he gives us to live, in justification to live well, in glorification to live forever. But to live, little profits him to whom it is not given, or who does not strive, to live well; and to live well would not suffice if it were not given to live forever.” And so throughout, everything is formally divided.

These formal divisions, a new thing in the history of preaching, came from applying to practical discourse the methods then pursued in the Universities.

Most of the great schoolmen were predecessors or contemporaries of Antony, and all the most vigorous thought of the time adopted their method. If it were asked how these methods themselves arose, the answer would seem to be this. The schoolmen sought to rationalize Christianity, to make it conformable and acceptable to human reason, as so many have done before and since their epoch. But these medieval thinkers could not rationalize as to the truth of Christianity, as to its sources, or its doctrinal contents, for all these were fixed for them by the unquestionable authority of the Church. So they fell to applying the processes of the Aristotelian logic to this fixed body of Christian truth, seeking by decomposition and reconstruction to bring it into forms acceptable to their reason. Each new philosopher would decompose more minutely and reorganize more elaborately. Thus logical division, formally stated, became the passion of the age. And while then and often afterwards carried to a great extreme, and though there have been many reactions, in preaching as in other departments of literature, yet this scholastic passion for analysis has powerfully affected the thought and the expression of all subsequent con-

turies. If any of you wish to examine the first known specimens of this method in preaching, and have not access to the rare old folio of Antony's works in Latin, I have seen advertised a small volume of translations from Antony of Padua by Dr. Neale, who has also given some account of him in the volume on Medieval Preaching. You will notice that most of Antony's sermons, as we have them, are really *sketches* of sermons, published, we are told, for the benefit of other brethren. Augustine dictated some short sermons, to be used by other preachers, but Antony has left the first collection of what modern pulpit literature knows only too well, as "Sketches and Skeletons."

(2) But one would think it must have been something else than formal scholastic divisions that made Antony's preaching so popular. And we find that he abounded in *illustration*, and that of a novel kind. Anecdotes of saints and martyrs had become somewhat stale, and Antony preferred to draw illustration from the trades and other occupations of those he was addressing, from the habits of animals, and other such matters of common observation.

(3) His allegorizing is utterly wild and baseless,

beyond anything that I have seen even in the Fathers. But such stuff seems always to have a charm for the popular mind, as seen in many ignorant Baptist preachers at the present day, white and colored—probably for two reasons, because it constantly presents novelties, and because it appeals to the imagination. Strict interpretation takes away from us for the most part this means of charming audiences, but we can to some extent make amends, since strict and careful interpretation will itself often give great freshness of view, even to the most familiar passages, while illustration both affords novelty and appeals to the imagination.

Thomas Aquinas, the Neapolitan Count, and Dominican friar, who died six centuries ago (1274) at the age of fifty, is by common consent regarded as the greatest theologian of the Middle Ages, and one of the greatest minds in the history of philosophy. It is surely an interesting fact that he was at the same time very popular as a preacher to the common people, being thus faithful to his Dominican vow. Amid the immense and amazing mass of his works are many brief discourses, and treatises which were originally discourses, marked by clear-

4 ness, simplicity and practical point, and usually very short, many of them not requiring more than ten minutes, though these were doubtless expanded in preaching to the common people. He has also 5 extended commentaries on perhaps half the books of Scripture, in which the method of exposition is strikingly like that with which we are all familiar in Matthew Henry, leading us to believe that in the former as well as in the latter case the exposition was, for the most part, first presented in the form of expository sermons. He is not highly imaginative, nor flowing in expression; the sentences are short, and everything runs into division and subdivision, usually by threes. But while there is no ornament, and no swelling passion, he uses many homely and lively comparisons, for explanation as well as for argument.

6 It is pleasant to think of the fact that this great philosopher and author loved to preach, and that plain people loved to hear him. And many of us ordinary men would do well like him to combine philosophical and other profound studies with simple and practical preaching. Thirty years ago, Jacob R. Scott, a Massachusetts man, and graduate of Brown

and of Newton, became chaplain to the University of Virginia, and gave his valued friendship to a young student who was looking to the ministry. When the young man began to preach, unfortunately without regular theological education, he wrote to Mr. Scott for information about books and advice as to study, and received a long and instructive letter, in the course of which was given a bit of counsel which has several times since gone the rounds of the newspapers: "Read Butler, and preach to the negroes, and it will make a man of you." The prediction has certainly been but very partially fulfilled, and one of the conditions, it must be admitted, has not been fully complied with. While preaching much to the negroes, and other ignorant people, he has not sufficiently studied Butler, and other philosophers. I tell the simple story partly in order to pay a slight tribute of gratitude to a son of Newton who has passed away, and partly because it may bring a little nearer to you the important thought that we ought to combine profound studies with practical preaching.

You may notice that the great medieval preachers I have mentioned all fall within the twelfth and

thirteenth centuries. To the same period belong the greatest of the Latin hymn-writers, Adam of St. Victor (who is now regarded as the foremost of them all), and the authors of the *Celestial City*, the *Stabat Mater*, and the *Dies Iræ*. If you inquire for the cause of this accumulation of eminent preachers and sacred poets in that age, the explanation would doubtless be chiefly the *Crusades*. These had powerfully stirred the soul of Europe, awakening all minds and hearts. At the same time, by keeping up a distant warfare, they had given many generations of peace at home, and thus afforded opportunity for the work of the great Universities and the rise of the great Schoolmen, and so likewise for the appearance of great preachers and hymn-writers. Moreover, the rise of the *middle class* greatly heightened the aggregate mental activity of society. And though what we call the “Revival of Learning” was much later than this, yet already there was a growing and inevitably inspiring acquaintance with the Classic Latin authors, as, for example, in the next generation after Thomas Aquinas, Dante shows himself familiar with Virgil. The study of the Roman Law had also been re-

vived, and there were now professors of Civil Law in all the great Universities. As regards preaching, we can see what causes ended this period of prosperity. For in the next two centuries (14th and 15th) there were again terrible wars in Europe itself. Scholasticism had run its course, the Papacy became frightfully corrupt, and the better spirits were either absorbed in Mysticism, or engaged in unsuccessful attempts to *reform* the Church. With the general corruption the great preaching orders rapidly degenerated. If Thomas Aquinas was a Dominican, and Tauler, so also was the infamous Tetzel, whose proclamation of indulgences called forth the theses of Luther.

Of the great Mystics I can only mention Tauler, doubtless the foremost of his class in that age. Some of you are probably familiar with an admirable volume containing his Life and twenty-five sermons, published in New York in 1858. Tauler lived on the Rhine in the fourteenth century, having been educated at the University of Paris, then the greatest of all seats of learning. In a time of great political and social evils, of protracted civil

war, followed by a terrible struggle between the Pope and the Emperor (for German Emperors and Popes have had many a fierce conflict before to-day), a time of frightful pestilence, a time of sadly dissolute morals even among priests and monks and nuns, Tauler labored as a faithful priest. After years thus spent, he was, at the age of fifty, lifted to what we call a Higher Life through the influence of a young *layman*, the head of a secret society which was trying to reform religion without leaving the Church. It was after this Higher Life period began with Tauler that he preached the sermons which were taken down by hearers and remain to us.

We ought to study these mystical writings. They represent one side of human nature, and minister, in an exaggerated way, to a want of men in every age. Our own age is intensely practical. Yet see how readily many persons accept the idea of a Higher Life, of the Rest of Faith, etc. Do not most of us so neglect this aspect of Christianity in our studies and our preaching, as to leave the natural thirst for it in some hearers ungratified, and thus prepare them to catch at, and delight in, such ideas and sentiments when presented in an extravagant

Vaughn, home with Appleton, Oct 7, 1877. 150

and enthusiastic form? If we do not neglect the Scriptural mysticism—as found in the writings of John and also of Paul—we shall see less readiness among our people to accept a mysticism that is unscriptural.

Let it be added that Tauler did not preach mere mystical raptures. He searchingly applies religious principle to the regulation of the inner and the outer life, and urges that ordinary homely duties shall be performed in a religious spirit.

I must pass with brief mention the preaching of the now celebrated “Reformers before the Reformation.” Of Wyclif, who died in England twenty years later than Tauler, and of his “poor preachers,” we may have time to think on another occasion. John Huss, who was a little later, and powerfully influenced by the writings of Wyclif, was an eloquent and scholarly man, University preacher and Queen’s Confessor in Bohemia, and his “fervid sermons” in favor of moral and ecclesiastical reformation long made a great impression. And to pass over many others, we must believe that there has seldom been more impressive preaching than that of the Italian Dominican Savonarola, who acted

the part of prophet, preacher and virtual ruler in Florence during the last years of the fifteenth century, when Martin Luther was a child. A century before Luther, lived Thomas a-Kempis, in the Netherlands and Gerson in France. It is much disputed which of them wrote the tract on "The Imitation of Christ." The former is said by historians not to have been a very eloquent preacher; Gerson was a preacher of real power, and highly esteemed by Luther.

We come now to the preaching of the great REFORMERS. In devoting to them the mere fraction of a lecture, we have at least the advantage that here the leading persons and main facts are well known. Let us notice certain things which hold true of the Reformation preaching in general.

(1) It was a *revival of preaching*. We have seen that in the Middle Ages there was by no means such an utter dearth of preaching as many Protestant writers have represented. Yet the preachers we have referred to were, even when most numerous, rather exceptions to a rule. Even the great Missionary organizations, the Franciscans and Domini

cans, poured forth their thousands of mendicant preachers to do a work which the local clergy mainly neglected, and which they were often all the more willing to neglect because the travelling friars would now and then undertake it. Peripatetic preachers, evangelists, however useful under some circumstances and worthy of honor, become a curse to any pastor who expects them to make amends for his own neglect of duty. In general, the clergy did not preach. And the Reformation was a great outburst of preaching, such as had not been seen since the early Christian centuries.

(2) It was a revival of *Biblical* preaching. Instead of long and often fabulous stories about saints and martyrs, and accounts of miracles, instead of passages from Aristotle and Seneca, and fine-spun subtleties of the Schoolmen, these men preached the Bible. The question was not what the Pope said ; and even the Fathers, however highly esteemed, were not decisive authority—it was the Bible. The preacher's one great task was to set forth the doctrinal and moral teachings of the Word of God.

And the greater part of their preaching was *expository*. Once more, after long centuries, people were

reading the Scriptures in their own tongue, and preachers, studying the original Greek and Hebrew, were carefully explaining to the people the connected teachings of passage after passage and book after book. For example, Zwingle, when first beginning his ministry at Zürich, announced his intention to preach, not simply upon the church lessons, but upon the whole gospel of Matthew, chapter after chapter. Some friends objected that it would be an innovation, and injurious; but he justly said, "It is the old custom. Call to mind the homilies of Chrysostom on Matthew, and of Augustine on John." And these sermons of Zwingle's made a great impression. There was also at the basis of this expository preaching by the Reformers a much more strict and reasonable exegesis than had ever been common since the days of Chrysostom. Luther retained something of the love of allegorizing, as many Lutherans have done to the present day. But Calvin gave the ablest, soundest, clearest expositions of Scripture that had been seen for a thousand years, and most of the other great Reformers worked in the same direction. Such careful and continued exposition of the Bible, based in the main upon sound exegesis, and pursued

with loving zeal, could not fail of great results, especially at a time when direct and exact knowledge of Scripture was a most attractive and refreshing novelty. The same sort of effect is to some extent seen in the case of certain useful laborers in our own day, who accomplish so much by Bible readings and highly Biblical preaching. The expository sermons of the Reformers, while in general free, are yet much more *orderly* than those of the Fathers. They have themselves studied the great scholastic works, and been trained in analysis and arrangement, and the minds of all their cultivated hearers have received a similar bent. And so they easily, and almost spontaneously, give their discourses something of plan. Accordingly they are in many respects models of this species of preaching. In general, it may be said that the best specimens of expository preaching are to be found in Chrysostom, in the Reformers, especially Luther and Calvin, and in the Scottish pulpit of our own time.

(3) The Reformation involved a revival of *controversial* preaching. Religious controversy is unpopular in our day, being regarded as showing a lack of charity, of broad culture, and in the estimation of some,

a lack even of social refinement and courtesy. It is possible that a few preachers, even some of our Baptist brethren, are too fond of controversy, and do perhaps exhibit some of the deficiencies mentioned. But it must not be forgotten that religious controversy is inevitable where living faith in definite truth is dwelling side by side with ruinous error and practical evils. And preachers may remember that controversial preaching, properly managed, is full of interest and full of power.

(4) We must add that there was in the Reformation a revival of *preaching upon the doctrines of grace*. The methods of preaching are, after all, not half so important as the materials. These great men preached justification by faith, salvation by grace. The doctrine of Divine sovereignty in human salvation was freely proclaimed by *all* the Reformers. However far some Protestants may have gone at a later period in opposition to these views, yet Protestantism was born of the doctrines of grace, and in the proclamation of these the Reformation preaching found its truest and highest power. There are many who say now-a-days, "But we have changed all that." Nay, till human nature changes and Jesus Christ

changes, the power of the gospel will still reside in the great truth of salvation by sovereign grace. Let the humanitarian and the ritualist go their several ways, but let us boldly and warmly proclaim the truths which seem old and yet are so new to every needy heart, of sovereignty and atonement, of spiritual regeneration and justification by faith.

It would be difficult to find so marked a contrast between any two celebrated contemporaries in all the history of preaching as that between LUTHER and CALVIN. Luther (1483-1546) was a broad-shouldered, broad-faced, burly German, overflowing with physical strength; Calvin (1509-64) a feeble-looking little Frenchman, with shrunken cheeks and slender frame, and bowed with study and weakness. Luther had a powerful intellect, but was also rich in sensibility, imagination and swelling passion—a man juicy with humor, delighting in music, in children, in the inferior animals, in poetic sympathy with nature. In the disputation at Leipzig he stood up to speak with a bouquet in his hand. Every constituent of his character was rich to overflowing, and yet it was always a manly vigor, without sentimental

gush. With all this accords one of his marked faults, a prodigious and seemingly reckless extravagance, and even an occasional coarseness of language when excited, leading to expressions which ever since Bossuet have been the stock in trade of Anti-Protestant controversialists, and some of which it is impossible to defend. Calvin, on the other hand, was practically destitute of imagination and humor, seeming in his public life and works to have been all intellect and will, though his letters show that he was not only a good hater, but also a warm friend. And yet, while so widely different, both of these men were *great preachers*. What had they in common to make them great preachers? I answer, along with intellect they had (force of character,) (an energetic nature,) (will.) A great preacher is not a mere artist, and not a feeble suppliant, he is a conquering soul, a monarch, a born ruler of mankind. He wills, and men bow. Calvin was far less winning than Luther, but he was even more than Luther an autocrat. Each of them had (unbounded self-reliance) too, and yet at the same time each was full of (humble reliance on God.) This combination, self-confidence, such as if it existed alone, would vitiate character, yet checked

and upborne by simple, humble, child-like faith in God this makes a Christian hero, for word or for work. The statement could be easily misunderstood, but as meant it is true and important, that a man must both believe in himself and believe in God, if he is to make a powerful impression on his fellow-men, and do great good in the world. This force of character in both Luther and Calvin gave (great force to their *utterance*.) Every body repeats the saying as to Luther that "his words were half battles." But of Calvin too it was said, and said by Beza who knew him so well, *Tot verba, tot pondera*, "every word weighed a pound,"—a phrase also used of Daniel Webster. It should be noticed too that both Luther and Calvin were drawn into much connection with practical affairs, and this tended to give them greater firmness and positiveness of character, and to render their preaching more vigorous, as well as better suited to the common mind. Here is another valuable combination of what are commonly reckoned incongruous qualities—to be a thinker and student, and at the same time a man of practical sense and practical experience. Such were the great Reformers, and such a man was the apostle Paul.

The vast reputation of Calvin as theologian and church-builder has overshadowed his great merits as a commentator and a preacher. With the possible exception of Chrysostom, I think there is, as already intimated, no commentator before our own century whose exegesis is so generally satisfactory and so uniformly profitable as that of Calvin. And by all means use the original Latin, so clear and smooth and agreeable, Latin probably unsurpassed in literary excellence since the early centuries. All his extemporized sermons taken down in short hand, as well as his writings, show not so much great copiousness, as true command of language, his expression being, as a rule, singularly direct, simple, and forcible. The extent of his preaching looks to us wonderful. While lecturing at Geneva to many hundreds of students (sometimes eight hundred), while practically a ruler of Geneva, and constant adviser of the Reformed in all Switzerland, France and the Netherlands, England and Scotland, and while composing his so extensive and elaborate works, he would often preach every day. For example, I notice that the two hundred sermons on Deuteronomy, which are dated,

were all delivered on week-days in the course of little more than a year, and sometimes on four or five days in succession. It was so with the other great Reformers. In fact, Luther accuses one preacher of leading an "*idle* life; for he preaches but twice a week, and has a salary of two hundred dollars a year." Luther himself, with all his lecturing, immense correspondence, and voluminous authorship, often preached every day for a week, and on fast days two or three times.

Luther had (less than Calvin of (sustained intensity,) but he had at times an (overwhelming force,) and his preaching possessed the (rhetorical advantage of being everywhere pervaded by *one idea*,) that of justification by faith, round which he reorganized all existing Christian thought, and which gave a certain unity to all the overflowing variety of his illustration, sentiment and expression. In fact, did he not carry his one idea too far, and have not Protestants yet to recover from following him in this error? The apostles speak of *loving* Christ and *knowing* Christ, as securing salvation, but Luther would in every case by main force reduce

it to believing.\* But the undecomposed idea of loving Christ is certainly more intelligible and practically useful in the Sunday School, and so there may be persons who will be more benefited by the idea of knowing Christ than by that of believing on him.

Luther shows great realness, both in his personal grasp of Christian truth, and in his modes of presenting it. The conventional decorums he smashes, and with strong, rude, and sometimes even coarse expressions, with illustrations from almost every conceivable source, and with familiar address to the individual hearer, he brings the truth very close home. He gloried in being a preacher to the common people. Thus he says: "A true, pious and faithful preacher shall look to the children and servants, and to the poor, simple masses, who need instruction." "If one preaches to the coarse, hard

\* For example, 'That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints,' etc. *Luther*: "This, however, is only to be attained unto by faith. Love has not anything to do in this matter, although it is an assistance as being an evidence whereby we are assured of our faith." So on John xvii. 3, 'That they may know thee,' etc. *Luther*: "For here you see the words are plain, and any one may comprehend and understand them. Christ giveth to all that believe eternal life."

populace, he must paint it for them, pound it, chew it, try all sorts of ways to soften them ever so little." He blamed Zwingli for interlarding his sermons with Greek, Hebrew and Latin, and praised those who preached so that the common people could understand. This subject of *popular* preaching has been much discussed in Germany down to the present day. There is a greater difference between cultivated people and the masses in Germany and England than in our own country. Yet even in America, even in New England, with its noble common schools and the omnipresent newspaper, the masses are comparatively ignorant, and need plain preaching, and we must not forget it.

Luther is a notable example of intense personality <sup>x</sup> in preaching. His was indeed an imperial personality, of rich endowments, varied sympathies and manifold experiences. They who heard him were not only listening to truth, but they *felt the man.* <sup>x</sup> Those who merely read his writings, in foreign lands and languages, felt the man, were drawn to him, and thus drawn to his gospel. There are conflicting opinions as to what is best in regard to the preacher's personality. Some offensively obtrude themselves,

and push the gospel into the background. Others think the ideal is to put the gospel alone before the mind, and let the preacher be entirely forgotten. "Hide yourself behind the cross," is the phrase. What is here intended is well enough, but the statement is extreme, if not misleading. What is the use of a *living* preacher, if he is to be really *hidden*, even by the cross? The true ideal surely is, that the preacher shall come frankly forward, in full personality, modest through true humility and yet bold with personal conviction and fervid zeal and ardent love—presenting the gospel as a reality of his own experience, and attracting men to it by the power of a living and present human sympathy—and yet all the while preaching not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord. In the Dresden gallery there is a small portrait by Titian, of a brother painter. He is in the foreground, a fine, rugged face, illuminated with the light of genius, while on one side, and a little in the background is the face of Titian himself, gazing upon his friend with loving, self-forgetting, and contagious admiration. *Thus* ought we to stand beside the cross. And observe that with all his boldness, Luther often trembled at the responsibility of preach

ing. He says in one of his sermons, “As soon as I learnt from the Holy Scriptures how terror-filled and perilous a matter it was to preach publicly in the church of God . . . . there was nothing I so much desired as silence . . . . Nor am I now kept in the ministry of the Word, but by an overruled obedience to a will above my own, that is, the divine will; for as to my own will, it always shrank from it, nor is it fully reconciled unto it to this hour.”

What I have time to say of Luther as to preaching must end with a paragraph from the Table Talk, which makes some good hits though very oddly arranged. “A good preacher should have these properties and virtues: first, to teach systematically; secondly, he should have a ready wit; thirdly, he should be elegant; fourthly, he should have a good voice; fifthly, a good memory; sixthly, he should know when to make an end; seventhly, he should be sure of his doctrine; eighthly, he should venture and engage body and blood, wealth and honor, in the Word; ninthly, he should suffer himself to be mocked and jeered of every one.” The expression, “he should know when to make an end,” recalls a

statement I have sometimes made to students, that public speaking may be summed up in three things: First, have something to say; secondly, say it; third and lastly, quit.

As to the preaching of the other leading Reformers, I cannot speak at any length. Melanchthon really preached very little. His lectures in Latin on Sundays were designed for his students. He did not enjoy preaching to miscellaneous congregations, and in the vulgar tongue. Zwingle (1484-1531) was a bold and energetic preacher, a thoroughly energetic man, and a most laborious student. Like Luther he was very fond of music, and would set his own Christian songs to music, and accompany them on the lyre. It is a German peculiarity that men have in every age so generally been practical musicians, and the neglect of this in our country is to be deplored. Singing will obviously be of very great profit, in many ways, to all young ministers, and instrumental music must not be considered unmanly or worthless in face of the fact that it has been so much practiced by those great peoples, the Hebrews, the Greeks and the Germans. Zwingle was not merely energetic and ardent,

but tenderly emotional, as shown by his sorrowing tears during the great Conference with Luther at Marburg. Beyond even the other Reformers, he made much use of *public debates*, a practice which had been made common by the schoolmen. In the days of chivalry and tournaments, the professors and students began to hold intellectual tournaments also, two men being pitted against each other, or one man fixing his thesis, and undertaking to maintain it against all comers. You remember that the Reformation began with Luther's theses as to Indulgences; and through all the period of the Reformation discussions were frequent. In Switzerland more than elsewhere these discussions appear to have produced important results. They seem in general to be most useful where men are unsettled in their opinions and indisposed to wide reading. Among us, they have now almost ceased in the older States, but are continued with keen relish in some parts of the West and South-west. Zwingle had one qualification for public discussions, which has sometimes been considered particularly effective, viz., great readiness in personal abuse—as shown, for example, in his writings against those whom he scornfully calls the Catabaptists.

Farel, the friend of Calvin, had a blazing French eloquence. But we cannot begin to enumerate. It was an age of great preachers, an age that called spirits from the vasty deep, and in troops they came. Of John Knox and the English Reformation preaching we may have another opportunity to think.

I must not stop without a word as to certain preachers of that day who have been too much neglected. The Anabaptists of the sixteenth century have so thoroughly a bad name in general literature that some persons would be surprised at the intimation that there were among them preachers of great power. By the help of my friend Dr. Howard Osgood, of Rochester Seminary, who has made the history of the Anabaptists a specialty, I am able to state a few facts of interest.

The most distinguished preacher among the Swiss and Moravian Baptists was Balthasar Hübmaier, whose name is now beginning to be heard of again, and concerning whom you will find a very good article in Herzog's *Encyclopädie*. He was educated at the University of Freiburg in Baden, and pro-

fessor, A. D. 1512, in the University of Ingolstadt, with the celebrated Eck as his colleague, and afterwards was Cathedral pastor in Regensburg. At these places he gained the fame of the most eloquent man of his day. But reading Luther's earlier works, and then studying the apostle Paul, he joined the reformed party, and in 1523, was a popular preacher in Switzerland, already beginning to deny the propriety of Infant Baptism. In 1525 he was baptized. Then came fierce conflicts with Zwingle at Zürich, and banishment to Moravia, where in two years he brought many thousands into the rising Baptist churches, which then seemed likely to include the whole population. But Moravia fell into the hands of Austria, and Hübmaier was martyred at Vienna in 1528. A Reformed contemporary, not a Baptist, called him "truly a most eloquent and most highly cultivated man." Zwingle, in replying to Hübmaier's treatise on Infant Baptism, uses many hard words as usual, but shows great respect for his abilities. He calls Hübmaier 'that distinguished Doctor,' and admits (in a passage otherwise highly arrogant) that he has a greater faculty of speaking than himself. The

writings of Hübmaier, which are difficult to obtain, are said to be marked by clearness, directness and force. They chiefly treat of the constitution and ordinances of the church. I find a really beautiful address (A. D. 1525) to the three churches of Regensburg, Ingolstadt and Freiburg, entitled "The Sum of a truly Christian Life," to be of the nature of a sermon. The arrangement is good, and the divisions distinctly stated. He is decidedly vigorous and acute in argument, making very sharp points. The style is clear and lively—when he has begun you feel drawn along, and want to follow him. Zwingle bears unintentional testimony to the excellence, in one important respect, of Hübmaier's method of argumentation. "You are wont to cry, 'I want no conjectures, bring forward Scripture, make what you say plain by Scripture,' etc." To all his later writings Hübmaier prefixed the motto, "Truth is immortal;" and certainly the hopes he expressed by this motto have been strikingly fulfilled as to the doctrine of religious liberty, which it is said he was among the first to announce and which in a new continent he had barely heard of has at last attained a glorious recognition.

I shall merely mention Conrad Grebel, educated at Vienna, and for two years the leader of the Swiss Baptists, who is said to have been learned, brilliant, with great power over an audience, an opponent whom Zwingle feared more than all others. And there were other Baptist preachers in Switzerland and South Germany, who were learned and eloquent men.

In Holland, Menno Simon, well known in Church History, was for twenty-five years (1536-61) "the greatest of all Baptist missionaries in Northern Europe, establishing hundreds of churches. He was a spiritual-minded man, and deeply versed in the Bible."\* A translation of his works has been published in Indiana, among the "Mennonites." His contemporary and successor, *Dirck Phillips*, is said by a Roman Catholic writer to have been "equal to Menno in eloquence and zeal, and superior in learning." We may add Bouwens, a very apostle in Holland and Belgium, whose diary records the baptism of near ten thousand persons baptized by himself, with the places; and this when a great price was set on his head by the merciless Duke of Alva.

In conclusion, let us remember that with the

\* Osgood. See a good article in Herzog.

Reformation began the free and wide use of *printing* to aid the work of preaching. In a few years after Luther took decided position, brief and pointed treatises of his were scattered through all Western and Southern Europe. Colporteurs were employed especially for this purpose, besides the much that was done by private exertion. This revived and purified Christianity seized upon the press as an auxiliary to the living preacher. The same course has been more or less pursued ever since, and notably in our own time. And perhaps few have even yet any just conception of the varied and powerful assistance we may derive from printing—and this without its being necessary for each church to set up its own newspaper. Every now and then some people discuss the question whether the press be not now more powerful than the pulpit. But really that is an unpractical inquiry. It is our true task and our high privilege, to make the pulpit, *with the help of the press*, more and more a power and a blessing.

## LECTURE IV.

### THE GREAT FRENCH PREACHERS.

A COMPLETE history of Preaching in France would of course go over ground to which we have heretofore made some reference. Thus in the medieval times, Peter the Hermit was a Frenchman, and so was St. Bernard. The good work done by the Waldensian preachers in the South of France in the twelfth century, led the Catholics (as we saw) to establish the Dominican order of preachers. And Calvin, though we think of him in connection with Geneva, was in all respects a Frenchman.

It may seem strange that we have almost no accounts of eminent preachers in France before the Middle Ages. And doubtless fuller information would show us that there were many men of power and influence. For the French are a nation highly capable of appreciating and producing eloquence. The dominant Franks did not materially modify

the character of the old Keltic stock, and the Kelts were from our earliest knowledge of them, and are still, an eloquent race. Cæsar describes to us popular orators among the Gauls who must have spoken with a fiery and passionate eloquence. The Gauls (or Galatians) in Asia Minor received Paul's early preaching with unequalled enthusiasm. The Scotchman who converted the pagan Irish, and whom all Ireland reveres as St. Patrick, must have been, to judge from all accounts given, a preacher of great power over the hearts of men ; and so was the Irishman Columba, who two centuries later preached from house to house throughout Scotland. The Irish to the present day are noted for a peculiarly imaginative oratory, not only in politics wherever there has been any political liberty, but also in preaching, notwithstanding the unfavorable influence of Romanism ; and the most eloquent preacher in the Church of England at the present time is an Irishman bred and born, the Bishop of Peterborough. The Welsh also have been famous for eloquent preachers. And everywhere, in Galatians, Gauls, Irish, Welsh, and modern Frenchmen, there is the same blazing enthusiasm and mental activity,

the same impulsiveness and prompt excitability, the same lively imagination, and (so far as we know) the same quick movements and passionate vehemence in delivery.

But instead of searching French history for proofs that in every age they have had preachers not unworthy of the Keltic blood, we shall find it more instructive to come at once to the Golden Age of the French Pulpit Eloquence and French Literature in general, the seventeenth century, the latter half of which is dear to Frenchmen as the age of Louis XIV. Let us carefully note how thoroughly this period in France *fulfilled the conditions* of highly eloquent preaching. And perhaps this can be best managed for our purpose by planting ourselves in the year in which Bourdaloue first preached before the king, the year 1670 (a little over two centuries ago), when the glorious age of Louis the Great was just reaching its full splendor.\*

The king himself, the centre of everything, is now thirty-two years old, his reign having begun

\* I follow usually the dates of the Oxford Tables, from which some of the facts are derived, and some also from Voltaire.

when he was a child of five years. While every great nation around has been losing strength, France has rapidly gained. Germany must require many generations to recover from the exhaustion produced by the terrible Thirty years' War, which ended only twenty-two years ago. Spain, which a century ago was the mistress of the world, has lost Holland and part of Flanders, and quite recently lost Portugal, has made a damaging peace with Louis, and under the rule of weak kings and the infamous Inquisition, has sunk into national weakness and discontent and almost into ruin. England, after the dreadful Civil Wars and the brief rule of Cromwell, has now for ten years been persecuting the Nonconformists and endeavoring to imitate the wretched vices of Charles II, who is but a pitiful vassal of France. Italy, divided into a number of warring states, and busy in the Levant with the Turks, has herself been again and again a battle-ground for the French and the Spaniards. Amid this weakness on every hand, France, long so feeble, has seen her opportunity and improved it. Condé and Turenne have gained many a splendid victory over the Germans and over the once invin-

cible Spanish infantry, covering themselves and their nation with the military glory in which Frenchmen so greatly delight, reviving the memory of that proud time when Charlemagne the Frenchman was Emperor of all Western Europe, and rendering themselves the objects of that enthusiastic popular admiration and love which will some years hence find expression in lofty funeral sermons.

At home, the two great Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin for forty years carried out with iron firmness the policy of Henry IV. and the Duke of Sully, steadily weakening the old feudal nobility and the once almost independent clergy, and concentrating all power in the crown, until fifteen years ago the young Louis, wise beyond his seventeen years, and conscious of despotic power, coolly gave his order to the Parliament, and uttered his memorable saying, "The State—I am the State." Many of the great nobles had in the previous century adopted the then powerful and rapidly growing Reformed religion as a means of making head against the crown, being ready enough, as unscrupulous politicians always are, to patronize any religion that could apparently strengthen their own political

**power.** The Reformed (or as we say, Protestants) unwisely accepted the support and protection of these great nobles, and thus religious interests became subordinate to political interests. The successive religious wars, ending with the bloody wars of the Fronde in the early years of Louis, have gradually weakened the nobles and made them dependent on the Crown, and shortly before the year of which we are speaking, many nominally Reformed nobles went over to the dominant church—as for example Turenne himself, who in 1668 turned Catholic, at the request of the gracious sovereign who had made him a Marshal—and many from among the masses of the Reformed, long used to seeking protection and guidance from the nobility, began rapidly to follow them into the conquering Catholic communion, the church of the splendid court and the all-powerful king. The work of the great Cardinals has been well done, and nine years ago, in 1661, Mazarin was succeeded by Colbert, the gifted minister of Finance, whose financial genius is now rapidly enriching the nation and strengthening the throne. He has introduced from the Low Countries many new forms of manufacture, in which the

skilful French fingers and the exquisite French taste are already beginning to surpass their teachers, and fast preparing for the days when Fashion, the mightiest of sovereigns, will sit enthroned in splendid Paris and rule over the civilized world. Along with manufactures Colbert has built up a spreading commerce and a powerful navy. Together with trade in the East and West Indies, he is attempting to rival the Spaniards and English in colonizing America. Some years ago, Canada was organized as a colony, and not many years hence the French will go for the first time down the Mississippi, and up and down its stream will claim a new and grand territory, which after the great king they will name Louisiana. In connection with and by means of all these financial enterprises, which are rapidly increasing the wealth of the country, the acute Minister confirms the triumphs of his predecessors over the feudal system, by building up a wealthy class of burghers, who look to the government for protection of business and property, and help by their financial strength to make the king utterly supreme over the old feudal nobility. Evil enough from this centralization and this wealth may come in the

future, but at present, France rejoices in her growing population and riches, is stimulated by the loftiest national pride, and looks with unutterable admiration to him who seems the embodiment of all her power and splendor and glory, the Great Monarch.

Besides this extraordinary national prosperity, and stimulating national spirit, it is an age of prodigious intellectual activity. In our year 1670, it has been forty-four years since the death of Bacon, whose ideas and methods are now widely known, and twenty-eight years since the death of Galileo, shortly after having (as it has been wittily stated) "at the age of seventy years, begged pardon for being right." Just forty years ago died the great astronomer Kepler, and young Isaac Newton, at the age of twenty-eight, is already working over Kepler's laws. Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood, died thirteen years ago, and ten years earlier died Torricelli, who learned the weight of the atmosphere, and invented the barometer. Just about this time were also invented the air-pump, the electrical machine, the pendulum. These grand discoveries and inventions at once indicate and produce great general activity of mind throughout the

cultivated circles of Europe. And this activity is seen not merely in physical science, but also in metaphysics. It is twenty years since the death of Descartes, the greatest of French philosophers, who applied the Baconian method of observation and analysis to metaphysics, and has become for France the father of idealism and of rationalism. Spinoza has already written most of his great essays in Pantheistic philosophy, which a few years hence, at his early death, he will leave behind. Malebranche, the leading disciple of Descartes, has reached the age of thirty-two ; and Leibnitz, a brilliant youth of twenty-four, living on the Rhine, has since the age of seventeen been issuing a succession of remarkable treatises on philosophy, law and politics—working out, among other things, a curious project for inducing Louis XIV. to leave Germany and the Low Countries alone, and turn his ambitious projects towards an invasion of Egypt. Hobbes is still living, at an advanced age ; and John Locke, now thirty-eight years old, dissatisfied with the ethical and political results of Hobbes' development of sensational philosophy, and stimulated by the writings of Descartes, is profoundly meditating on

the faculties of the human mind and the sources of human knowledge, and slowly preparing for his great "Essay on the Human Understanding," which will not appear till twenty years hence. In this year, 1670, he writes an impracticable constitution for the American colony which in honor of Charles II. is called Carolina.

The inquiring and erudite minds of the age are also drawing together and beginning to act in association. The English Royal Society was chartered ten years ago on the accession of Charles II, but had in fact existed in the time of Cromwell; and Colbert, "jealous of this new glory," has in the last few years encouraged the formation of like societies in France, the Academy of Inscriptions, the Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Music, and also the Royal Library.

Besides, there are admirable *Schools* of the highest order. The University of Paris is perhaps no longer at the head of Europe, as it was in the later Middle Ages, but it has a great reputation, and in Theology there is no school of higher authority than the Sorbonne. Colleges have been established in numerous towns by the Jesuits, who make teaching a spe-

cialty and have reduced it to a science, and the volunteer teaching at Port Royal was a few years ago exerting a potent influence. The great preachers of the age are all men of regular and thorough education.

Along with all this activity in physical and metaphysical science, and in education, there has rapidly arisen a *general literature* of singular richness and vigor and consummate elegance—a literature that will be the pride of France for centuries to come. Corneille, who with all his literary faults has more elevation and nobleness than any other French dramatist, is now an old man, and his works are all well known. Molière, probably the foremost writer of *Comedy* in all the modern world, has issued nearly all the plays that will be known as his *chefs-d'œuvre*. Racine is still young, but has published several great tragedies, especially the *Andromache* and the *Britanicus*. Numerous satires of Boileau have been published, and every body is reading some *Fables* of La Fontaine. The Duc de la Rochefoucauld five years ago sent forth into all hands the Collection of shrewd and witty and often mournfully profound *Maxims* in which he essays to show that the motive of all human action is self-love. Mme. de Sévigné, very

highly educated and wonderfully attractive notwithstanding her lack of personal beauty, is admired and influential in court circles, and devoutly fond of pulpit eloquence, and will begin next year the correspondence with her daughter which is to make her the most famous letter writer in the world. Above all, Pascal, the prince of French prose-writers, the marvel of precocity, of mathematical knowledge and physical discovery and philosophical thought, and the deeply humble and devout Christian, who died eight years ago, had five years before his death published his "Provincials," a work of such literary excellence and charm, such keen and delicious satire, that all France is reading it; and even the Jesuits, though they hate, malign and affect to despise him, yet secretly read his wonderful book. In consequence of Pascal's unpopularity as a Jansenist, it will be some years before the publication of his "Thoughts," a collection of papers he has left behind him, consisting of mere fragments, yet rich in the profoundest Christian wisdom, and destined to be lovingly studied for long years to come.

By these great writers the French *language* has been developed and disciplined into the very highest

excellence of which it seems capable. In liquid clearness, vivacious movement and delicate grace it is unsurpassed among ancient or modern tongues, while not equal to Greek or to English in flexibility and in energy. Only a few years later than 1670 it will supersede the Latin as the language of European diplomacy.

In *Art* as well as in Literature the age is marked by great activity and decided excellence. It is but forty years since the death of Rubens and Van Dyk, while Rembrandt is still living at the age of sixty-eight, and Murillo, in Spain, at about the same age. The great French painter, Poussin, died seven years ago, and Claude Lorraine, who will long continue to be regarded as the foremost of landscape painters, is seventy years old. The art of painting has just reached its height of power and popularity in France ; of all the great French Academies the earliest was the Academy of Painting, established in 1648. In Architecture, Paris already boasts the Louvre, the Palais Royal, and many other noble structures ; and there is a youth of twenty-three, named Mansard, who will add greatly to the architectural glories of Paris and of Versailles, and will hand down his name to a curious

immortality in connection with a peculiar style of roof which he has invented

We thus perceive that when Bourdaloue first preached before the king, in 1670, it was an age well suited to the attainment of excellence in anything that belongs to the realm of thought or of art. The nation was powerful, glorious, wealthy and vigorously governed. A strong sentiment of nationality fostered national literature in every department. Startling progress in physical science and novelties in metaphysics were stirring men's minds. A popular despotism left no room for political activity or aspiration, while a grand outburst of general literature had awakened an excited interest. It was an *Augustan* age.

And certain peculiar circumstances stimulated French Catholics at that time to the pursuit of pulpit eloquence.

One of these was the fact that the Reformed, or Protestants in France had long possessed able and eloquent preachers. The indefatigable Jesuits, organized to contend against Protestantism in every way, perceived, now that the Civil Wars were over, that it was desirable to rival the Protestants in preaching,

and began to use all their immense influence in the encouragement of pulpit eloquence.

Another stimulating circumstance was the rise of the Jansenists, proclaiming much the same truths that we call the “doctrines of grace,” distinguished for learning, and educational influence, for deep piety and literary power. In the famous schools at Port Royal were taught such men as Tillemont, the Church Historian, and the poet Racine. Among the teachers was De Saci, who made the French version of the Bible which has taken fast hold on the popular heart, and Arnauld, the fruitful and powerful polemic ; and there was not a Jesuit in all France who did not smart and burn under the delicate and stinging sarcasms of the Port Royalist Pascal.

Now the Jansenists did not particularly cultivate eloquence. But the Jansenists of Port Royal had great power at Court. And the shrewd Jesuits, looking around for every means of gaining the superiority over these hated rivals, perceived that much might be done through the *penchant* of the king for eloquent preaching.

This was the most singular of all the circumstances I have referred to as stimulating the French

Catholic preaching of that age, the fact that Louis XIV. so greatly delighted in pulpit eloquence. It was a curious idiosyncrasy. He not merely took pleasure in orations marked by imagination, passion and elegance, as a good many monarchs have done, but he wanted earnest and kindling appeals to the conscience, real preaching. In fact, Louis was in his own way a very religious man. He tried hard to serve God and Mammon, and Ashtoreth to boot. His preachers saw that he listened attentively, that his feelings could be touched, his conscience could sometimes be reached. They were constantly hoping to make him a better man, and through him to exert a powerful influence for good upon the Court and the nation. Thus they had the highest possible stimulus to zealous exertions. And although they never made Louis a good man, yet his love for preaching, and for preaching that powerfully stirred the soul, brought about this remarkable result, that it became the *fashion* of that brilliant Court to attend church with eager interest, and to admire preachers who were not simply agreeable speakers but passionately in earnest. Not a few in the court circle were striving like the king to be at once

worldly and religious, some were truly devout, but everybody recognized that it was "quite the thing" to be an admirer of pulpit eloquence. I know of but one other example in the history of preaching in which this was the height of the fashion in a splendid and wicked court. That other instance is Constantinople, at the time when Gregory Nazianzen and afterwards Chrysostom preached there; and we remember how brief and unsatisfactory was their career in the great capital. Here at Paris the experiment lasted longer. And notice that as most of the hearers really went only because it was fashionable, and must have their taste gratified, and as the French taste for literature and art was now very highly cultivated, so the great court preachers, while intensely earnest, must also be *literary artists* of the highest order.

Such were the general and special conditions under which the Catholic pulpit attained—under the reign of Louis XIV. and under that reign alone—such extraordinary power and splendor.

Let us now briefly note the principal preachers, both Protestant and Catholic, of that epoch. We may

divide into three periods : (1) The period before Bossuet, (2) Bossuet and Bourdaloue and their contemporaries, (3) Massillon and Saurin.

In the two generations preceding the career of Bossuet, we find the French *Catholic* pulpit at a very low stage. Recent writers have shown that the Catholic preachers of that time consisted of two classes. Some, rhetorical and full of ancient learning but destitute of devoutness, mingled paganism and Christianity, even illustrating the Passion of Christ by the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the bravery with which Mucius Scevola plunged his hand into the flames, and the mourning of the Romans over the death of Julius Cæsar. A later French writer said of them, “One needed prodigious knowledge in order to preach so badly.” Others, rude and vulgar, appealed to the tastes and passions of the ignorant, very much after the fashion of what we call hardshell preachers. Thus, as it has been said, “The court preachers ruined religion by adapting it to the taste of the *beau monde*, while the vulgar haranguers ruined it also by adapting it to the taste of the multitude.” There were of course some exceptions. Voltaire mentions one preacher, Lingendes, about 1630, and mentions him

as he does so many things, with a malicious purpose. This Lingendes left among his manuscripts some good funeral sermons, and Voltaire says that Fléchier, in his funeral discourse for Marshal Turenne, borrowed from one of these his text, the entire exordium, and several considerable passages besides. It has been recently shown that Bourdaloue also borrows from the same preacher some ideas and an occasional short passage, and that some of Bourdaloue's plans in Panegyrics resemble those of P. Senault, a preacher then much in vogue for ornate erudition and rhetoric.

But the Reformed or Protestant pulpit of that period was, as I have already stated, occupied by some really able men, whose sermons had such power and literary merit as to be published and widely read. These men, long overshadowed by the celebrated Catholic and Protestant preachers of the next generations, have received tardy justice from the noble work of Vinet, "History of Preaching among the Reformed of France in the seventeenth century," a work containing just such biographical notices, representative extracts and critical estimates as one desires to have, and a model which I trust some of those present may one day follow in depicting important periods in the

history of the English and American pulpit. Drawing upon Vinet, let me briefly mention three or four of these men, who show conclusively that the Protestant preachers in this first half of the century were far in advance of the Catholic preachers.

Du Moulin (Miller), 1568-1658, was a famous preacher in Paris and afterwards at Sedan. He had been educated in England, and professor of philosophy in Scotland. While pastor in Paris, an attempt was made by James I. of England to use him in a plan for uniting the French and English Protestants into one church. Banished for these political complications, he took refuge at Sedan (which did not then belong to France), and lived there as professor of theology and pastor. Du Moulin published more than seventy-five works, including ten volumes of sermons. He seems not to have been a man of the highest genius, but full of vigor and good sense, powerful in controversy, practical and pointed. He was regarded by the Catholics as their most formidable antagonist, and his works long continued to be bulwarks of Protestantism. Fenelon undertook to refute one of them, near the close of the century. The style of Du Moulin is marked by the homeliness and brusque freedom be

longing to what French critics call the *Gallic* period of their language, before the men of Louis XIV. had reduced it to an elegant bondage. And he was purposely simple in the arrangement of discourses, and direct and downright in utterance, because he regarded that as the duty of a preacher of the gospel—a view which certainly contains important elements of truth.

Faucheur (1585-1657) was a man of culture and taste, and “essentially a preacher.” He wrote a treatise on Oratorical Delivery, which is said to be elegant in expression and full of wisdom. And yet, while a careful student of the art of preaching, his own preaching was direct and simple. Surely this is as it should be. Faucheur published eight volumes of sermons. His style is remarkable for *movement*. From beginning to end of the discourses he “seems never to touch the ground.” There is never a moment of distraction or cessation, but he presses right on. Now this may be an excellence, but may be a fault; and it is a matter in regard to which Americans of to-day are in some danger of fault, being so restless and excitable. Good preaching must have movement, but not uniform in velocity or on the same level. If a dis-

course is to be highly impassioned anywhere, it cannot be equally impassioned everywhere. Study the great musical compositions—what variety as to rapidity of movement, and as to passion. So oratory requires a basis of repose, with alternations of passion and quiet, of more rapid and less rapid movement. Yet some of our preachers and Anniversary speakers seem to think, and some hearers seem to agree with them, that one must go like the fast mail trains. We do not give a man a chance to be really eloquent, if we require him to be always rapid, if we are too restless to tolerate repose.

Faucheur was a master of language. Vinet maintains that he anticipated Pascal in using what was destined to become the *modern* French; in knowing how, "at that moment of crisis, to choose in the ancient tongue what the future was going to preserve, and amid the numerous new expressions those which the future was going to adopt." Pascal has the glory of having fixed the language. "He did it, not by introducing new words or constructions, but by giving the seal of his genius to a language which existed already, and which we find in his earlier contemporary, Faucheur."

A professor of philosophy at the age of eighteen, and called when very young to a leading pulpit near Paris, was Mestrezat, 1592–1657, of whom it is said by Bayle, a sufficiently impartial critic. “There are no sermons that contain a sublimer theology than those which he preached on the Epistle to the Hebrews.”

Omitting several others, let us notice *Daillé*, 1594–1670, whose little work “On the right use of the Fathers” became very popular, and continues to be valued to the present day. He published twenty volumes of sermons, which show that while not a highly eloquent man, he was an able reasoner, full of good sense, and with a familiar, neat and flowing style. He was the first Frenchman whose controversial religious works ever became popular, and the first Protestant whose literary merits are known to have been recognized among the Catholics.

Balzac, a literary man of distinction (1592–1654), one of the original members of the French Academy, and who has left some excellent prose, appears to have greatly admired *Daillé*. He speaks in a letter of a visit received from him, in which

Daillé “said such good things and said them so well that I assure you no conversation ever satisfied me more than that, nor left in my mind more agreeable images.” In another letter he speaks in the strongest terms of Daillé’s sixth sermon on the Resurrection, saying, “What an excellent production! how worthy of the primitive church! How powerful the preacher is in persuasion! and how convincing are his proofs! . . . . I have never read anything more rational and more judicious!”

Now it may be observed that these able and popular Protestant preachers all flourished before Bossuet began his career, and that Daillé, the latest of those mentioned, died in the year 1670, in which Bourdaloue first preached before the king. Each of them preached for many years in Paris, and their numerous and spirited controversial writings, together with the number of Protestant nobility who attended their ministrations, must have drawn to them the constant notice of the Catholic teachers and preachers.

I think it follows not only that there were eminent Protestant preachers before the outburst of Catholic

eloquence, which is manifest,<sup>1</sup> but that their ability and popularity must have stimulated the Catholics to rivalry.

We now reach the great Catholic preachers, Bossuet and Bourdaloue. Of these, every one among us has some knowledge, and I shall attempt only to present points of special interest and instruction.

Bossuet (1627-1704) was of good family, and reared in a house full of books, of which he early became passionately fond, delighting in Latin and Greek literature. One day, in the library, the boy came across a copy of the Bible, which he had never read. It was open at Isaiah, and, fascinated with the sublime poetry, he went on eagerly reading, and at length burst forth and read aloud to his father and uncle, who had been talking politics, and who now "listened, half awe-struck, to the boyish reciter." From this

<sup>1</sup> Compare the dates:

Du Moulin 1568-1658.

Faucheur 1585-1657.

Mestrezat 1592-1657.

Daillé 1594-1670.

Claude 1619-1687.

Bossuet 1627-1704.

Du Bosc 1623-1692.

Bourdaloue 1632-1704.

Saurin 1677-1730.

Fénelon 1651-1715.

Massillon 1663-1742.

time the book he most loved was the Bible. Through life he always carried a Bible with him on his journeys, and almost every day, his secretary says, made fresh notes on the margin. He knew by heart almost the entire text (for he had a prodigious memory), and yet seemed always to read with as much attention and interest as if he had never read it before. His preaching abounds in felicitous Scripture quotation and remark. And who can tell how much this passion for Scripture, beginning with Isaiah, did to foster his eloquence—to develop that chastened splendor, that sublime but subdued magnificence of imagery and diction, which makes him the very perfection, the *beau ideal* of French eloquence ? This story of his finding the Bible might remind one of Luther ; and it is to be noticed that these greatest of Catholic preachers all showed loving familiarity with the Bible. But the difference also is great and characteristic. Luther found Romans, and finally learned from it justification by faith ; Bossuet found the book of Isaiah, and was fascinated by its poetry. And through life this difference was maintained. Bossuet drew from the Bible sublime sentiments ; Luther drew from it the central truths, the very life-blood, of the gospel of salvation.

At fifteen Bossuet was profoundly studying at a college in Paris the philosophy of Descartes, whose writings were just becoming generally known, he being thirty years older than Bossuet.

At sixteen he maintained a “thesis of philosophy” with such distinguished success, that he received the foolish invitation to come suddenly, at 11 P. M., to a house in Paris which was a centre of literary fashion, and there before a brilliant audience to preach upon a text assigned. The result made him at once a celebrity. All this was very unhealthy, but it shows the kind of artificial relish for pulpit eloquence which already (1641) pervaded the court circle, and what sort of atmosphere was breathed by these great preachers. Some other young men had become popular preachers in Paris before taking orders, and Bossuet was saved from this by the advice of a bishop, who urged him to turn away from such premature popularity and become mature in culture and character before he preached much in the capital. This was doubtless the turning-point of Bossuet’s career, which decided that he was not to be the meteor of a moment but an abiding luminary. How often are brilliant young men

spoiled by the applause bestowed on a few early efforts—silly admirers persuading them that their gifts lift them above all ordinary dependence on training and experience. It is precisely such men who most imperatively need thorough discipline.

Bossuet finally graduated at twenty-one, making *graduate* a remarkable address in the presence of the great Prince of Condé, who from that time was his friend. He spent some years of faithful labor as archdeacon of Metz, (how strangely sound these names, Metz and Sedan, after recent occurrences,) and at the age of thirty-three began to preach before the king. For the next ten years he preached regularly in Paris, and often before the court. Then Bourdaloue came ; Bossuet was made bishop of Meaux, and afterwards seldom preached in Paris, except his great Funeral Orations. I cannot speak of his subsequent work as instructor to the Dauphin, for whose use he wrote the Discourse on Universal History, the first attempt at a Philosophy of History. Nor of his great work on the Variations of Protestantism, probably the most effective polemic against Protestantism that has ever been written—acute, adroit, ~~a~~ trifle unscrupulous, and in style most attractive

Bossuet was capable, as he had shown when a lad, of absolutely *improvising* with great power, but he was very unwilling to preach without some written preparation. Most of his sermons were preached from a brief sketch, often in pencil—jotting down the “points, and the prominent lessons he wished to teach.” Some of them were written and rewritten, with the greatest care, and then recited. Yet he very earnestly condemned those who in preparing a sermon think more of “its + after effects in print” than of its effect in the act of preaching.

He possessed in the highest degree the physical requisites to eloquence—having a fine, in fact a strikingly handsome and majestic person, with a voice powerful and pleasing, and perfect grace of manner. His style is the perfection of French, the glory of French literature—clear, vivid, drawing you on from beginning to end, with skilful variety in topic, imagery, and passion or repose of expression, and throughout a grace, a felicity, a charming elegance, that in all the world has scarcely been rivalled. A gifted pupil of mine once said, “I read Bossuet with admiring despair.” This is not an

unhealthy feeling at the first blush of acquaintance, for it may be presently followed by admiring *study*, not with the hope of rivalling, but with longing to enjoy more fully, and to learn sweet lessons of refined taste, and love of the truly beautiful in literary art.

Yet I cannot concur in the opinion now almost universal among French critics, that Bossuet is the greatest of their preachers. I think that honor belongs to Bourdaloue (1632-1704), whom the French now place even lower than Massillon. Bourdaloue appeals especially to the intellect and the conscience, and while also highly imaginative and impassioned he is not in these respects equal to the others. Bossuet appeals especially to the imagination and the taste, and so the most characteristic and the most popular of his discourses are the Funeral Orations, in which the requisites are graceful narration, high-wrought imagery and delicate sentiment. These, together with his charming style, are what the average French writer of to-day most highly appreciates. It is precisely in these things, as seen in his Funeral Orations and Panegyrics, that Bourdaloue is least successful. Bossuet is also honored

by the modern litterateur because of the great and lasting distinction of his other works, while Bourdaloue has left almost nothing but sermons. Massillon, on the other hand, has marvellous power in touching the feelings, in awakening tender emotions, together with great clearness, ease and beauty of style. Secular critics relish that which excites emotion, which is sweetly pathetic or awe-inspiring, much more than that which, through convictions of the intellect, makes its stern demand on the conscience. These considerations may account for the fact that such a change has occurred in the judgment of critics. Their own contemporaries regarded Bourdaloue as decidedly superior to Bossuet.

Bourdaloue's father was a lawyer, of good family, and a gifted speaker. The son was educated at a Jesuit college, and naturally became a Jesuit notwithstanding his father's opposition. In his studies he showed a special talent for mathematics, which easily connects itself with the prominence of analysis and argument in his preaching. After graduating, he was directed, according to the wise Jesuit usage, to spend some years in *teaching*, which is often a particularly good preparation for the life-work of

preaching. He first taught grammar, classic literature and rhetoric, afterwards philosophy, and finally theology. During this period, he wrote a brief treatise on Rhetoric. For ten years, including the later years of his teaching, he preached as a sort of home missionary. While thus preaching at Rouen, his sermons drew great crowds, and the Jesuit authorities began to understand his power and value. A Jesuit associate says: "All the mechanics left their shops, and the merchants their business, the lawyers left the palace and the doctors their patients." And he good-humoredly adds: "For my part, when I preached there the next year, I put everything straight again; nobody left his business any more."

So at the age of thirty-seven, after this long course of study, teaching and provincial preaching, Bourdaloue is brought to Paris. In a few months we hear that the church overflows, and a caustic letter-writer adds that "these good Fathers of the Society proclaim him as an angel descended from heaven." They see that here is a man who will do them honor, and strengthen their position in the rivalry with the Jansenists. The next year, 1670,

he preached before the king, and Madame de Sévigné, who was from first to last his ardent admirer, says he acquitted himself “divinely.” For thirty-four years from that time Bourdaloue was the leading court-preacher, only in the last five years outshone by young Massillon. He preached the Advent and Lent series by turns before the king and in the principal parishes in Paris, in the former case “making the courtiers tremble,” as we are told by Madame de Sévigné, and in the parish churches “attracting such crowds that the carriages were coming for hours in advance, and trade was interrupted in the neighboring streets.” He also frequently preached in the humble village churches, and it is said that the people were astonished at the simplicity of his language, and would say, “Is this the famous Paris preacher? Why, we understood all he said.” A like story is told of Tillotson, of Archibald Alexander, and of various others.

Bourdaloue, as already observed, is remarkable for profound thought and forcible argument. Voltaire says, “He appears to wish rather to convince than to touch the feelings; and he never dreams of pleasing.” And yet he does please, in a high degree,

and does sometimes deeply move. Is not this a preacher of the highest order—occupied with noble thoughts, aiming to move through instruction and conviction, and pleasing without an effort, and without diverting attention from truth and duty?

It is especially in treating *moral* subjects that Bourdaloué is a model. There had been no preaching of great merit in this respect since Basil and Chrysostom, and perhaps no one in later times has treated moral subjects in so instructive and admirable a manner as Bourdaloué. He analyzes the topic with conspicuous ability, and depicts with a master hand the beauty of virtuous living, and the terrible nature and consequences of vice. It is interesting to compare his pictures of life with those of his contemporary Molière, the latter presenting always the ludicrous side, which entertains but seldom greatly profits, while the preacher, with his mind all on sin and eternity and God, will not let you think of vice as amusing, but makes you shudder at its wickedness and its awful results. There is no more remarkable example of Bourdaloué's excellence in this respect than his sermon on *Impurity*. At any time it would have been difficult to treat this

subject in that licentious capital and court, with that shameful example in the king himself, but there were special difficulties at the moment. There had recently been discovered, in the case of a countess, a series of the most frightful poisonings and other crimes, in connection with the most shameless and incredible debauchery. All Paris shuddered. It was then that Bourdaloue spoke, with a boldness that amazes and almost alarms us, and yet without a touch of real indelicacy, without a word to awaken prurient curiosity. There are many other instructive examples among his numerous discourses on subjects of morality. It has appeared to me that few preachers treat this class of subjects with decided skill, or so frequently as is to be desired ; and I think Bourdaloue is in this regard eminently worthy of early and careful study. If I might add a slight suggestion, it would be as follows : To eulogize virtues is often more useful than to assail vices. And in attempting to depict vices, have a care of two things : (1) That you do not seem to know more of these matters than a preacher ought to know ; (2) that you do not excite curiosity and amusement rather than abhorrence.

The famous story that Bourdaloue one day described in his sermon an adulterer, and then looking at the king, solemnly said, "Tu es ille vir," is pronounced by the most recent biographer an invention; but he does not present the evidence and we cannot judge. At any rate Bourdaloue was constantly saying very pointed things, which the king could not but feel were meant for him, and yet Louis had so much of good sense and conscience, and saw so clearly the preacher's sincerity and honesty, that he took no offence. In fact, strict morality is not really an unpopular theme. People feel that the preacher ought to say these things, and that they ought to hear them. So once when some courtiers suggested that Bourdaloue spoke too boldly and pointedly, the king replied: "The preacher has done his duty; it is for us to do ours."

Bourdaloue was a great student, but was also fond of society, and himself sprightly and even humorous in conversation. It was thus that he came to know so well the character and wants of his time. He often met Racine, Mme. de Sévigné, Boileau. Let a preacher seize every opportunity of free conversation with the most cultivated and

the most ignorant, being more solicitous in both cases to hear than to speak, and then he may be able in preaching to bring home his message to the “business and bosoms” of all.

We can say but a word of Fénelon (1651-1715,) who was a younger contemporary of Bossuet and Bourdaloue. Both gifted and good in an extraordinary degree, educated with the greatest care, perhaps the foremost of all French preachers in that *unction* in which the French so greatly delight, with the highest charm of style, and great actual popularity as a preacher, he has left us to conjecture his pulpit power, with the help of four sermons which are believed to have been written in his early life, and which are not of remarkable excellence. This was certainly carrying to a great extreme the preference for unwritten preaching, which he has so eloquently exhibited in his beautiful Dialogues on Eloquence. Why did he not write at least some discourses after preaching them, like Chrysostom and like Robert Hall? He severely condemns Bourdaloue’s method of strict recitation, and as a matter of general theory the condemnation is undoubtedly just, but why refuse to write

at all? In all practical matters he who prefers one plan need not utterly abjure others. And as to methods of preparing and delivering sermons, the highest and noblest standard is that privately stated by a living preacher, "I wish to be master of all methods, and slave of none."

Two *Protestant* contemporaries of Bossuet and Bourdaloue were men of distinguished ability.

Du Bosc (1623-1692,) was of good family, and highly educated. You notice that, as already remarked, all the great preachers of this epoch, Protestant and Catholic, were thoroughly educated, and most of them reared in good society. Besides great clearness of thought, fertility of invention and richness of imagination, Du Bosc had singular physical advantages, being extremely well-made, with a voice at once agreeable and powerful, and vigorous health. In 1668 he appeared before the king, to entreat that he would not, as proposed, take away certain rights of the Protestants. After hearing him through, the king went into the queen's chamber and said, "Madame, I have just listened to the best speaker in my kingdom." And turning to the courtiers he repeated. "It is certain that I never heard any

one speak so well." He had then often heard Bossuet, though never Bourdaloue. The address of Du Bosc is given in full by Vinet, together with copious extracts from sermons, and is a truly noble specimen of eloquence, worthy to be generally known. Du Bosc early became pastor at Caen, in Normandy, and three several invitations to churches in Paris could never draw him away from the flock he loved.

The most famous Protestant preacher of the time was Claude (1619-1687). His father was a minister of great knowledge, who carefully educated him at home, and then sent him to study philosophy and theology at Montauban. For some years he was pastor of a *small* church, where he could devote a great part of his time to study. A young minister who wishes to make the most of himself must give at least one-third of his time to studies which look not to next Sunday but to coming years; and this can usually be best done in a small charge. Claude became pastor in Paris at the age of forty-seven, and from that time was the soul of the Reformed party, being especially vigorous in oral and written controversy with the Catholics. A book of his in reply to a work by the Jansenists Arnauld

and Nicole, was eagerly circulated by the Jesuits, who were ready for anything to damage the Jansenists. Claude's oral controversy with Bossuet attracted great attention. The high-born Protestant lady who brought it about was already disposed to go over—as so many of the Reformed nobility were then doing—and she soon after became a Catholic. But Claude sustained himself with great ability against the most splendid polemic in France. Even Bossuet's report shows that his arguments were acute and powerful, and the great bishop says, "I feared for those who heard him."

When the edict of Nantes was revoked, in 1685, Claude was especially named, and required to quit the kingdom in twenty-four hours. He knew it some days in advance, and his farewell to his flock is a noble and affecting monument of that time of trial. His ordinary discourses, of which but one volume was left, seldom show intense passion, and were very carefully wrought out and revised; yet with all their careful composition and purity of style, there is rapid movement—that spirited *dash* which belongs alike to French soldiers and to French orators, and which is so admirable in both.

Claude's *Essay on the Composition of a Sermon* was for a century and a half the favorite Protestant text-book. The editions of Robert Robinson and Charles Simeon are well known. Its great fault is that it teaches the construction of sermons on too stiff and uniform a plan. Both by example and in precept Claude protests against the extreme rhetorical brilliancy in which the national taste of the time delighted, which his great Catholic contemporaries cultivated as necessary in court-preachers, and to which some of the Protestant preachers had become a little inclined. The general feeling among the Reformed was that a preacher should eschew oratory. When this fact is taken into the account, I think it becomes clear that Claude and Du Bosc, though inferior in splendid eloquence and in real power, are yet worthy to be named even with Bossuet and Bourdaloue.

As to the remaining period of that great age, a briefer account must suffice. There are two conspicuous names, Massillon and Saurin.

Massillon (1663-1742) had an early history quite similar to that of his great predecessors. Obscure

origin, but college education, monastic retirement, then professor of Belles-lettres and of Theology, and at the age of thirty-six named court-preacher, in 1699, five years before the death of Bossuet and Bourdaloue. He greatly admired Bourdaloue, but avowedly determined to pursue a very different course. His theory, as given by the nephew who edited his works, was as follows: The preacher must not go into much detail upon points of character and life which concern only a *part* of his hearers, as particular callings, ages, etc., but must aim at universal interest, and this is found chiefly in the *passions*. Accordingly Massillon habitually assumes principles as granted, or establishes them very briefly, and then proceeds to analyze and depict the reasons why men do not conform to these principles, as found in their passions (in the broad sense), including appetites, sloth, ambition, avarice, etc., and to expose the numerous self-deceptions by which men quiet conscience. Now this certainly represents one very important department of preaching. But observe two things as to what he condemns. (1) What is addressed to one class of persons *may be made* very interesting and profitable to others,

as for example, sermons to the young may interest the old, sermons to Christians may impress the irreligious, and *vice versa*. (2) It would not be well if all preachers took principles for granted. It is necessary for some minds, and interesting to many, to have principles established and confirmed by the preacher.

In fact, Massillon seems to have been too much influenced by the desire to take a different tack from Bourdaloue, and thus to have made his own methods one-sided. But all the world knows what wonderful power he had in exciting emotion. Appealing to the passions is an important part of the preacher's work, though not the highest part; and no finer example of it can be found than in Massillon, together with a style of singular ease and sweetness. But when he is lauded as one of the very greatest of preachers, then I say, compare his most famous sermon, "On the small number of the Elect," with the somewhat similar sermon of Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God," and you will feel that the one is superficial and artificial, compared with the tremendous power of the other.

Massillon's nephew says his sermons were not composed, as one might suppose, with slow toil, but "with a facility akin to the miraculous; not one of them cost more than ten or twelve days." His delivery was not declamatory, like that of Bourdaloue and most Frenchmen, but comparatively quiet; yet he seemed to be completely possessed and penetrated by his subject—which is often far more impressive than "tearing passion to tatters," while in the French Court it had the charm of novelty.

In 1718 he preached before Louis XV., then nine years old, ten sermons in Lent, which are commonly known as his *Petit Carême*, "Little Lent." They are probably the earliest examples of sermons addressed to a child, and are admirable for their simplicity and sweetness.

The great Protestant preacher Saurin (1677-1730) was a contemporary of Massillon, but connection between them was impossible, for Saurin was a child of but eight years when the revocation of the Edict drove him and his father to Geneva. His father was a lawyer, famous for his elegant style. At Geneva, then "the capital of the Protestant world," the youth had great advantages for educa-

tion. At seventeen he enlisted in a volunteer corps of refugees to help William of England against Louis XIV., and proved a gallant young soldier, at the same time often conducting religious worship and even preaching to his comrades. After three years, when peace was made, he returned and studied three years longer at Geneva, gaining great distinction as a student. His exercises in oratory "drew a crowd, for which on one occasion it was necessary to open the doors of the cathedral." His five years as a pastor were spent in London, with a small church of French refugees. Here, like a true Protestant, he married a wife. Yet, though a real love affair, this union did not turn out very well. Unexampled as the case may be, the minister's wife was of an unlucky disposition ; and being blessed with the company of a mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and two brothers-in-law, she made the house too hot to hold them. A bad manager she was, too, while he, for his part, was negligent and wastefully generous.

Well, well, but he was a great preacher, and when London fogs proved unhealthy, they created him a new position at the Hague, where he spent his

remaining twenty-five years in extraordinary popularity and usefulness. Places in his church were engaged a fortnight in advance by the most distinguished persons, and people climbed up on ladders to look in at the windows. The famous scholar Le Clerc (Clericus) long refused to hear him, on the ground that a Christian preacher should have nothing oratorical, and he “distrusted effects produced rather by a vain eloquence than by force of argument.” One day he consented to go, on condition that he should sit behind the pulpit, so as not to see the oratorical action. At the end of the sermon he found himself in front of the pulpit, with tears in his eyes.

For Saurin was a true orator. While not devoting himself, like the great Catholic preachers, to the *art* of eloquence, he possessed an energetic nature, a powerful imagination, a good person and voice, and his delivery, though commonly quiet, often swelled into passionate earnestness. And he was also a great thinker, beyond even Bourdaloue, probably beyond any other French preacher except Calvin. The doctrinal views we call Calvinism compel men to think deeply, if they are capable of thinking at all. It is

then not strange that the published sermons of Saurin at once gained a great reputation throughout the Protestant world, and exerted a most wholesome influence. In Germany, where preaching was then at a low ebb, it is believed that Mosheim and his school derived much inspiration from Saurin, and at a later period Reinhard frankly acknowledged great indebtedness to this noble French model. There were numerous English translations, but that of Robert Robinson has, I believe, superseded all the others. Among all these great French preachers, I should say, read mainly in Bourdaloue and Saurin.

His last years were saddened by the harsh assaults of some ministers who were envious and jealous. Alas! that old and bitter, that too often repeated story of ministerial jealousy.

But why did French pulpit eloquence so suddenly fail, after rising so high? Why is it that after Massillon and Saurin you do not know the name of any French preacher for almost a century?\* We can easily see, as we saw before in the time of Chrysostom and Augustine, the cause of this decline.

\* Except Bridaine, who flourished 1750, and is eulogized by Maury (*Principles of Eloq.*)

Protestantism was crushed in France, its best elements banished, and the few who remained and continued faithful, were destitute of the means of culture, for ministers and for people, while the refugees in foreign countries would generally continue to worship in French for only one or two generations. The Catholics, for their part, not only lost the stimulating rivalry of Protestant preaching, but also the artificial stimulus of Louis XIV.'s love for pulpit eloquence. Massillon, after preaching the aged king's funeral, and trying to make some impression on the child that succeeded him, retired to his diocese, and for many years preached faithfully there, but never revisited the court. And now that Jansenism and Protestantism were gone, infidelity and corruption struck deep and spread widely and rapidly through the nation. There can be no true eloquence where there is not *hope* of carrying your point, and preachers could have little hope of doing good in the days when Voltaire and his associates led the national thought, and when the king could say, “After me, the deluge.” About 1775 a Jesuit preacher at Notre-Dame did give several sermons that manifestly had something in them. A biograph-

ical sketch at a later period mentioned that this preacher's discourses had a rather peculiar character, and that "people thought they saw errors in them." It has since come to light that the worthy Jesuit preached a whole volume of extracts from Saurin, word for word.

These things being considered, we have little occasion to concur in Voltaire's explanation of the decay of pulpit eloquence, viz., that the subject had been exhausted, and nothing was now possible but commonplace.

And how is it that of late we have eloquent French preaching again? Napoleon gave the Protestants toleration and support, which the subsequent governments have not disturbed. About the same time there was in Switzerland a reaction to evangelical sentiments, producing Vinet, D'Aubigné, and Cæsar Malan. As soon as there was time for educational opportunities to show their effect among the French Protestants, we hear of Adolphe Monod, a man of rare eloquence. James W. Alexander, hearing him on two different European journeys, each time declared him the most eloquent preacher living; and it seems to me doubtful whether, with

the exception of Robert Hall, the century has produced his equal. About the same time came the elder Coquerel, a man of great power in the pulpit. It is difficult to gain information upon the question, but my impression is that in this century as in the seventeenth, effective preaching in France began with the Protestants. I know not whether this Protestant movement had produced any conscious effect on the erratic Lacordaire, who thirty years ago began to revive at Notre-Dame the traditions of the old Dominicans as a preaching order; or on the Jesuit Father Félix, who followed him in that celebrated pulpit, to be succeeded himself a few years ago by the well known Father Hyacinthe. Of Protestants the most famous at the present time are the younger Coquerel, and Bersier, whom I heard repeatedly in Paris some years ago, who has published several volumes of sermons, and whom not many living preachers equal in true eloquence.

In conclusion, let us briefly notice certain *faults* in the French preachers, especially in the great Catholic preachers of the seventeenth century.

They never *suggest* much beyond what they say

This is a general defect of French style, arising from the passion for clearness. "Whatever is not clear is not French," they repeat with a just pride. But by consequence, they avoid saying anything that cannot be said with entire clearness. And so we find little of that rich suggestiveness, which is common in the best English speaking and writing, and even more in the German.

There is a monotonous uniformity of elegance. They are never familiar, never for a moment homely. There is nothing of anecdote, scarcely anything of narrative illustration. Like the court of Louis XIV., they never appear save in full dress. And so many elegant discourses finally weary us with their glitter, like the pictures in the galleries of the Louvre.

In fine, these sermons, with all their merit, are too plainly a work of art. The art is very perfect, such as in a drama or a romance we might regard with unalloyed satisfaction. But for preaching it is too prominent. We sigh for something unmistakably natural, real, genuine.

As artists, then, the great French preachers may be to us most instructive and inspiring masters. But when it comes to actual preaching, then the

highest art—nay, the old maxim is itself superficial and misleading, for our aim should be not simply to have art and conceal it, but to rise above art—or, if we must state it in Latin, *summa ars artem superare*.

NOTE. Since the lecture was delivered, a letter has been received from M. Bersier (see above, page 183), in reply to some inquiries, and I take the liberty of extracting as follows :

“ The Catholic pulpit is singularly sterile at our epoch in France. We may say that since Lacordaire, Ravignan, and Father Hyacinthe no orator has appeared of real excellence. Father Félix, of the order of the Jesuits, has preached with a certain success for several Lent seasons at Notre Dame, and just now they are trying to bring into vogue the name of Father Monsabré. But neither of them rises to the height of his task. Their fundamental characteristic is the ultramontane logic, developing inflexibly the principles of the Syllabus, hurling them as a defiance against contemporary society, and saying to it: Submit to Rome, or thou art lost. No profound study of the Scriptures, no psychology, nothing truly interior, or persuasive. It is the method of outward authority brought into the pulpit, with the arid procedures of the scholastic demonstration—a thing at once empty and pretentious.

“ In the Protestant Church of France, one may name M. Coulin, of Geneva, who has made at Paris remarkable sermons on the *Son of Man*; M. Dhombres of Paris, a highly practical orator and full of unction; and in the Liberal party Messrs. Fontanès and Viguier, who, since the death of Athanase Coquerel the younger, are its most distinguished preachers.”

M. Bersier has abstained from mentioning his own associate among the Independent Reformed Churches, M. de Pressensé.

## LECTURE V.

### THE ENGLISH PULPIT.

IN this brief course of lectures you have seen that the periods embraced are far too vast for satisfactory treatment; and yet some important departments in the History of Preaching have to be left entirely out of view. Besides the Greek preachers of medieval and modern times, the Spanish and Portuguese and later Italian preachers and others, we have taken no account of the German pulpit since Luther. It seemed better, for various reasons, to treat of the French rather than the German preachers. And for this final lecture I choose the English pulpit, which, even if we should not glance at Scotland or America, presents a field of immense extent and sufficiently embarrassing in its richness.

The History of Preaching in England comprises *five* specially noteworthy periods: (1) Wyclif, (2)

The Reformation, (3) The Puritan and Anglican preachers of the seventeenth century, (4) The Age of Whitefield and Wesley, (5) The Nineteenth Century, of which there is an earlier and a later division.\*

Before Wyclif, we find little in English preaching that is particularly instructive. The missionaries Augustine and Paullinus, who converted the heathen English in the seventh century, must have spoken with power, but their eloquence is not preserved. Let us frequently remind ourselves that the history of recorded preaching is but a small part of the history of preaching. The venerable Bede has left us some very brief discourses, supposed to have been imperfectly written down by his hearers, which show life and spirit, but would have been forgotten but for his famous History.

\* Although English pulpit literature is so rich, it is remarkable that we have no *treatise* whatever on its history. The well known aversion of the English to rhetorical art might in this case have been overcome by their love of history. Of late years America has greatly surpassed the mother-country in the production of numerous and valuable works on Homiletics, and in like manner it may be that Americans will take the lead in writing the history of the English Pulpit. Corresponding works exist already among the French, and are somewhat numerous in Germany. But even the German writers confine themselves almost entirely to their own country, being apparently quite unacquainted with the English preachers.

Wyclif (1324-83), the first great Protestant, the first who not merely condemned some evils in the Catholic church, but struck at the very heart of the Papal system, was a preacher of great power. He does not exhibit much imagination, and so is not in the full sense eloquent. But he is singularly vigorous and acute in argument, and has the talent for x “putting things” which belongs to a great teacher of men. His bold antagonisms, hard hits and unsparing sarcasms, his shrewd use of the dilemma and the reductio ad absurdum, show the master of popular argumentation. In his development from a scholastic divine, a student and teacher of dry philosophical theology, into a pungent, stirring preacher and popular leader, he is a representative man ; for these two sides of character and life must in some measure be combined in every man who is to achieve great usefulness as a preacher of the gospel. Yet with all this popular power and skill, Wyclif did his chief work not by his own preaching, but through others. He gathered around him plain and devout men, filled with his ideas and his spirit, and sent them forth as home missionaries, and it was chiefly by their humble and zealous preaching, publicly

and from house to house, together with the circulation of Wyclif's tracts, written in the language of the people, that the new doctrines spread like wildfire through all England, till a hostile contemporary complained that "a man could scarcely meet two people on the same road but one of them was a disciple of Wyclif." These "simple priests," as they were called, corresponded to the Dominican order of preaching friars—as it was when first constituted—also to Wesley's circuit riders, and to the often illiterate but devoted men who have done so much in the establishment of Baptist churches throughout the United States. We see in this work of Wyclif and his friends an example of the fact that a professor may sometimes do more through his pupils than he could have done by personal labor as pastor and preacher. In fact, every gospel worker should strive to infuse the spirit of work into others. The wisest and most useful pastor is not he who accomplishes most by his individual exertions, but rather he who can gather the largest number of true helpers, being himself the nucleus around which their labors may crystallize into a compact and effective whole.

Wyclif's reformation contained the germs of that which one hundred and fifty years later proved so grandly successful ; and yet in a few years after his death it was crushed, leaving of manifest results only his translation of the Bible, and the marked influence of his writings upon John Huss, in distant Bohemia, which at that time was connected with England by a royal marriage. England's first great reformer, and her first great poet, Chaucer—who was Wyclif's younger contemporary and friend—had no successors for many weary generations, during which the nation was enfeebled and demoralized by the hundred years' struggle with France, and afterward by the Wars of the Roses at home. When all this had passed, and there was again peace and orderly government and returning prosperity, then again the English were ready to think of curing the dreadful evils which disgraced the clergy and the church, and just then came the spread of the New Learning, with Erasmus' Greek Testament and Tyndale's English Bible, the stirring ideas of Luther, and the political and connubial schemes of Henry VIII., all of which concurring forces produced the English Reformation.

There is no doubt that the Revival of Letters formed one leading occasion of the Reformation, both in Germany and in England. And already before the Reformation began, this revived study of Greek literature was producing some wholesome effect upon preaching. As early as 1510 we read of Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, as "the great preacher of his day, and the predecessor of Latimer in his simplicity, directness and force." He had gone to Italy to study Greek, and then for several years had taught Greek at Oxford, awakening the enthusiastic admiration of Erasmus, who said, "When I heard him speak, methought I heard Plato himself talk." Notice then that this earliest of the great Greek scholars of England was as a preacher remarkable for "simplicity, directness and force." It is another significant fact that Colet, who had lectured at Oxford on the Greek Testament, with all the other professors of the University taking notes, was perhaps the first preacher of the time that regularly expounded the Scriptures on Sundays. Good popular exposition always rests on loving study of the Scriptures, and usually upon study of the original.

Everybody knows that the most notable preacher

of the English Reformation was Latimer (about 1490 to 1555). The superficial reader of his sermons would probably at first regard Latimer as a sort of *oddity*, with his homely humor, queer stories and quaint phrases, his frank egotism and general familiarity. But read on carefully, and you soon become convinced that you are dealing with a powerful mind and an elevated character. He was well educated at Oxford, but never forgot his experiences as the son of an humble yeoman, and while brought into relation to the great and learned, never lost sympathy with common life and the common mind. A student of books, you see that he has been still more a keen observer of men and things. He does not speak of life as one who has seen it dimly mirrored in literature, but as one who has eagerly looked upon the vivid original. His utterances are as fresh as morning air, or the morning song of the birds. He grasps truth with vigor, handles it with ease, holds it up before you in startling reality. It is pleasant to say that some of his best sermons have recently been made accessible to all, in one of the small volumes of "English Reprints," sold for a trifle. I think that persons who occupy them-

selves much with the study of pulpit eloquence, who are hunting in every age for "Masterpieces," and setting up lofty standards of homiletical art, would find it most wholesome to read several sermons of Latimer, to feel the power of his careless vigor and intense vitality, and remind themselves that not quite all the great preachers of the world have been perpetually engaged in the production of masterpieces of eloquence.

How many of the most influential Reformers were men of much the same stamp. Luther, Zwingle, Wyclif, Latimer, Knox—all intellectual and educated, but all men of the people, in full mental sympathy with the people, and thus able to command popular sympathy, and to send great electric thrills through the community, the nation, the age. Some of our American Baptist ministers of a hundred years ago had all these qualities, except education. If John Leland had been thoroughly educated in his youth, he might have shaken the continent. Great is refined culture and literary taste, but greater far is shrewd mother-wit, and racy humor, and wide and varied sympathy, and close, personal observation of the strangely mingled life we men are living in this strange world.

Two years after Latimer preached the “Seven Sermons before Edward VI.” which remain to us, there was added to the number of the king’s chaplains (1551) the other most remarkable English preacher of the time, John Knox (1505-1572). Professor Lorimer, in his “John Knox and the Church of England,” published last year from newly discovered materials, has conclusively shown that the great Scotchman exerted a powerful influence in England, and did more than Bishop Hooper to develop and shape that Puritan sentiment which a century later became so powerful. In his preaching, as already intimated, he somewhat resembled Latimer, being an educated man but quite superior to pedantry and formality, and remarkable for force of thought and stirring earnestness. Like Latimer too, he usually preached without written preparation; and as he seldom wrote out his sermons afterwards, we have to judge of his powers as a preacher mainly from his other works. I think you will best get the impress of his character and catch his spirit by reading his “History of the Reformation in Scotland.” His was “the martial or do-battle style of pulpit oratory,” in fact he was

particularly fond of martial figures. This was natural in those stormy times, and in a preacher whose life was often in sore peril, but at whose grave the Regent Murray pronounced the now well known eulogium, "There lies he, who never feared the face of man." Fearlessness is a quality scarcely less needful for preachers in the "piping time of peace," than in time of persecution, scarcely less needed by us, for example, than by our fathers of a century ago. How many now are afraid of social influence, or afraid of being stigmatized as wanting in "culture," or ignorant of "science," or—worst of all—as lacking in "charity." While eschewing bitterness, let us covet boldness.

Knox is a notable example of entering upon the ministry late in life. Educated for the Catholic priesthood, but early deposed because of Protestant heresy, he meant to spend his time as professor and public lecturer, but was pressed into the ministry at the age of forty-two. There is a further lesson in the fact that about this time he learned Greek, and at the age of forty-nine we find him at Geneva, busily studying Hebrew. Let it not be forgotten amid our elaborate processes of ministerial educa-

tion that a man of competent intelligence may begin to preach when he is growing old, and be very useful; but also that such a preacher, if he has the right spirit, will be eager to supply, as far as may be, his educational deficiencies.

The martial style of thought and expression which characterized Knox, was fitly attended by a most impassioned delivery. One who often heard him in his old age, afterwards described him as lifted by two servants up to the pulpit, "whar he behovit to lean, at his first entrie; but er he haid done with his sermone, he was sae active and vigorous, that he was lyk to *ding the pulpit in blads*, and flie out of it." One of the pulpits he pounded is still preserved in Stirling; I remember standing in it, and while not presuming to aspire after an imitation of his delivery, yet longing to catch something of his bold and zealous spirit. It is a fact which might be worth some reflection, that the Scotch preachers, though living farther North, have as a rule been more fiery and impassioned than the English.

As to other preachers of the Reformation period, we can say but a word. Bishop Hooper, the martyr,

and the first Englishman who distinctly represented the Puritan tendency, was very zealous in preaching, for we are told by Burnet that at one period he preached four, or at least three times every day. Cranmer's sermons show force of argument, and an agreeable style, but little of the imagination and passion which are necessary to eloquence. Bishop Jewell was a learned man, and sometimes eloquent, but with little that was characteristic or very highly impressive. Archbishop Sandys was hot enough in his numerous quarrels, but not warm in preaching.

Between the Reformation and the time of Cromwell, including about a century, there were many able ecclesiastics, many learned divines, and some striking preachers, but none of the highest eminence. Hooker is immortal for his philosophical work on Ecclesiastical Polity, but was not attractive as a preacher. Dr. Donne is said to have been a man of learning and remarkable for brilliant imagination and tender sentiment; but his sermons are spoiled by those conceits, which abound in his poetry also. Let all fanciful and brilliant men remember that perpetual efforts to strike and dazzle soon weary and

fail of their end. Bishop Andrewes was a learned and able man, worthy of his position as one of King James' translators of the Bible, but his sermons are so laden with learned quotation and discussion that they lack movement, and I cannot read them with profit or patience. Bishop Hall is seen to best advantage in his justly celebrated "Contemplations on the Old and New Testaments," which every preacher will find exceedingly instructive and suggestive, and from which I have observed that some recent German preachers borrow striking remarks, sometimes giving them *verbatim* without acknowledgment.

No preacher of the highest power or of lasting reputation for three-quarters of a century, and yet this was precisely the age of Shakspeare and Bacon. The fact certainly calls for explanation. It will not do to say that the national mind was too much occupied with the Armada and the new trade with the Indies. These did not prevent the grand literary outburst, represented by Raleigh and Sidney, Spenser, Shakspeare and the other great dramatists, and Bacon. The comparative inferiority of preaching must be referred mainly to two causes. (1) There was in

all Europe a reaction, more or less marked, from the excitement which had accompanied the early stages of the Reformation; and as a natural consequence of this reaction, preaching would become less intensely earnest. (2) There was in England at this time a great lack of religious freedom, and without this we can hardly anywhere find examples of the highest pulpit eloquence. The more radical reformers, nicknamed "Puritans," who insisted that church government, ceremonies, and religious life must all be strictly conformed to the "pure Word of God," and not controlled by the crown or by old Catholic usage, were from the time of Edward VI. numerous and earnest, but by no means agreed among themselves as to the length to which they would carry their opposition to Episcopacy, Catholic ceremonies, and Royal supremacy over the church. These unorganized and varying radical tendencies were sternly repressed by Elizabeth, and with no small success, both because of her immense personal popularity and by reason of her comparative moderation and regal tact. Still, while the reaction from the early zeal of the Reformation was lessening the zeal of the dominant churchmen, these Puritan tenden-

cies continually, though slowly, gathered strength. Under James I., who was unpopular and unwise, the persecution grew much more harsh and irritating, and therefore the Puritans became stronger. It began to appear to them that both political and religious freedom depended on the maintenance and triumph of their Puritan principles. Under Charles the two parties became more and more antagonistic and embittered, each party hating whatever doctrines and customs the others maintained, and the Puritans gradually became willing to die for their tenets, fearless of persecution and because fearless, free in heart. Meantime the Royalists had taken up the new theory that Episcopacy was Scriptural, of Divine appointment, like the Divine right of kings, and so their civil and religious loyalty mingled and strengthened each other. Now again there was burning religious earnestness and zeal, and thus it became possible that there should be intensely earnest and truly eloquent preaching.

Meanwhile, the thoughts of men were aroused and widened, as the seventeenth century went on. Voltaire thinks the French Calvinistic refugees carried eloquence into foreign countries. But this is

nonsense as regards England, for the first Huguenot refugees found the great age of English pulpit eloquence almost at an end. In fact, every one of the great English preachers, Puritan and Anglican, with the single exception of South, was older than Bourdaloue, and several of them were twelve or fourteen years older than Bossuet.<sup>1</sup> Clearly they did not learn eloquence from the French. The truth is that both English and French were stirred and moved by the spirit of the age, as I tried to describe it in the last lecture. And in England this spirit of the age combined with the fierce conflict between Puritan and Churchman, to quicken religious thought and kindle religious zeal, and thus to create the noble English eloquence of the seventeenth century.

The great preachers of that age are so well known that a brief reference to each of them may be at once intelligible and sufficient.

Jeremy Taylor (1613-77), a graduate of Cambridge and always a zealous loyalist, was silenced

<sup>1</sup> Examine the following table:

Baxter .....	1615-1691	Leighton....	1611-1684	Bossuet .....	1627-1704
Owen .....	1616-1683	Jer. Taylor..	1613-1677	Bourdaloue .	1632-1704
Flavel.....	1627-1691	Barrow.....	1630-1677	Fénelon.....	1651-1715
Bunyan .....	1628-1688	Tillotson....	1630-1694	Massillon....	1663-1742
Howe .....	1630-1705	South .....	1638-1716	Saurin.....	1677-1730

during the Protectorate of Cromwell, and twice imprisoned, just as Bunyan was afterwards imprisoned by the other side. Supported by a nobleman as private chaplain, he spent those stormy years in diligent study and writing, and Charles II. made him a bishop. The “poet preacher,” as he is often called, would be intolerable now were it not for his fervent piety. His style is almost unrivalled among orators for its affluence of elegant diction, and its wealth of charming imagery. It is the very perfection of that species of eloquence which so many Sophomores are disappointed at not finding in Demosthenes, which they so fondly admire in Society speeches that go forever curling like blue smoke towards the skies. With the modern love for directness and downrightness of expression, we are apt utterly to condemn this high-wrought splendor of ornamentation, even as we should consider one of Sir Walter Raleigh’s doublets of bright-hued velvet, slashed with lace, to be very pretty no doubt but a trifle ridiculous. Even Dr. South already ridiculed Taylor’s poetic imagery with merciless severity; and at the present day I think few persons of mature age can read long in his glittering pages without weariness. And yet if one’s

style is naturally dry, he would find it a very profitable thing to interest himself in Jeremy Taylor, not only the Sermons (which may be had in a single volume), but still more the famous treatises on Holy Living and Holy Dying.

Similar to Taylor in fervor and sweetness, even surpassing him in unction, and at the same time remarkable for his clear and engaging style, is Archbishop Leighton (1613-84). Learned, deeply devout, and of kindly and loving nature, his pages reflect his character. If you ask why he is so much praised and so little read, the answer would be, I think, that his writings, like his character, are lacking in force. He was not a man of decided nature and positive convictions. He consented to leave the Scotch Presbyterian ministry and become a bishop, with the sincere hope that he might mingle the fire and water of the two great religious parties, and sadly mourned over his failure to overcome stubborn convictions which he was constitutionally unfitted to comprehend. Now there is a corresponding want of decision, positiveness, power, in his works, and this is a want for which nothing can make amends.

Leighton was fifty years old when he changed

his denomination, and the credit of his eloquence might be claimed by both sides. But exactly contemporary with him and Jeremy Taylor were two Puritan preachers of great eminence, Baxter and Owen.

Baxter (1615-91) was not regularly educated, as were nearly all the distinguished preachers of that age, but from youth was a great reader, and through life a voluminous writer. His controversial works are said to show great metaphysical subtlety, and a good deal of hot-headed unfairness. His schemes for ecclesiastical union or “comprehension” were spoken of last summer by Dean Stanley with enthusiastic admiration, as might have been expected, but to ordinary mortals they seem much more creditable to his heart than his head. But as preacher, and as pastor, Baxter’s powers have seldom been equalled. The general reader cannot be advised to study his *sermons*, for with all their power they are to our taste very wearisome by their great length and their immense and confused multiplication of divisions and particulars. The scholastic method of dividing and subdividing without end reappears in these great Puritan preachers as nowhere else. Besides the

demand which high Calvinism always makes for close thinking and careful distinctions, these interpreters were influenced by the desire to find everything in Scripture, and to draw out from every passage the whole of its possible contents; and they were restrained in their analytical extravagances by no such sense of artistic propriety as marked the French Calvinistic preachers, and in a less degree the Anglican preachers of the same age. It may be added that none of the Puritan divines seem to have given the slightest attention to finish of style, caring only for copiousness and force—a torrent of speech. These facts may help to account for the immense extent of their writings. Every possible question, of religion and of politics, was then hotly discussed with fresh and present interest; each of these questions the writer would treat under every possible aspect and with a studious multiplication of particulars; and not a moment's thought was bestowed on elegance of expression or artistic symmetry of arrangement. No wonder they wrote so much.

But while the great mass of Baxter's works have lost their interest, and his sermons are unattractive, every minister ought carefully to read

his practical treatises which have gained so wide a fame, the Call to the Unconverted, Saints' Rest, Narrative of his own Life, Dying Thoughts, and Reformed Pastor. These exhibit the great and singularly profitable characteristic of Baxter's preaching and writing, viz., his burning, earth-shaking, tremendous earnestness. In this high quality of preaching he has hardly anywhere an equal. Read these volumes, again and again, and let them kindle anew in your soul the zeal of the gospel. John Angell James tells of an "Earnest Ministry" in such a way as to make one desire earnestness; but far more will Baxter do towards making us really earnest.

Owen (1616-83) was a scholar in both classical and Rabbinical learning, worthy to be the contemporary of Lightfoot and Walton, ambitious as a boy student at Oxford, prodigious in life-long study and authorship, and at the same time a simple, earnest, and highly impressive preacher. His great exegetical and theological works were the favorite study of Andrew Fuller, who regarded his character also with admiring reverence. Fuller was a very noble example of the "self-made" theologian and preacher, but he made himself with the help of

the great *scholars* who had preceded him—as self-made men commonly must do. A conveniently accessible and good specimen of Owen's sermons may be found in the volume on Forgiveness, which is a series of discourses on the 130th Psalm.

A dozen years younger than Baxter and Owen was Flavel (1627-91). He also was educated at Oxford, and a good scholar. While not equal to Owen in vigor and depth of thought, or to Baxter in overwhelming earnestness, he is pre-eminent for tenderness, unction, and also excels in clearness, both of arrangement and of style. He constructs discourses after the fashion of the time, but in striking contrast to those of Baxter and Howe, his plans are lucid, and even to our altered taste are not unpleasing. It was by hearing a pious lady read Flavel that young Archibald Alexander, a schoolmaster in the Wilderness, near Fredericksburg, Va., was brought to Christian faith and hope.

Bunyan (1628-88) was not only without regular education, but was not even a great reader like Baxter. Yet his sermons are quite *à la mode*, full of divisions and subdivisions, and their tone of thought shows intellectual sympathy with the best

minds of the age. Even in those few cases in which really great "self-made" men have not learned much from books, they are always educated by the thought of their time, the ideas and aspirations which fill the intellectual atmosphere. When Bunyan began to preach, at the age of twenty-eight, Owen and Baxter were forty years old, Milton forty-eight, and it was only two years before the death of Cromwell. How much there was to stimulate and educate the susceptible and vigorous mind of the young tinker. Bunyan's sermons, though often wearisome in length and in minute analysis, yet show clearness of arrangement and great fulness of thought, with singular practical point and consuming earnestness. His language in preaching cannot be expected to exhibit that high poetic grace, that exalted and charming simplicity into which his fancy was lifted amid the inspiring dreams of Bedford jail, but it is language not unworthy of the immortal dreamer. He abounds in lively turns and racy phrases, in a vivid dramatism that no preacher has surpassed, and his homeliest expressions are redeemed from vulgarity by a native elegance, an instinctive good taste. The brief story of his early life and conversion given in the treatise

valled "Grace Abounding" is worthy to be placed beside Augustine's Confessions, and his allegory of the Holy War has been unjustly obscured by the lastre of its great rival. But the "Solomon's Temple Spiritualized" shows the same creative imagination gone crazy with wild allegorizing, because unrestrained by any just principles of interpretation. Only a great genius could produce such nonsense.

It remains to mention, among the foremost Puritan preachers, John Howe (1630-1705). The Life of Howe, by that admirable writer, Henry Rogers, is of late accessible in a cheap form. As there was very little of incident to relate, the biographer has made his work all the more valuable to us by discussing many related matters in the religious history of the time.

Howe was graduated both at Cambridge and at Oxford. It is to be noticed that in that age men who held to Calvinistic doctrine and non-episcopal church government could have the benefit of the English Universities; and that most of the great Puritan divines were graduates, as were Henry Dunster, and others of those who established the civilization and culture of New England. This fact is suggestive,

and yet we are warned not to push too far our inferences from it by the cases of Baxter and Bunyan. At Cambridge, Howe was intimate with Cudworth, More, and other famous Platonists, and became a devoted and appreciative student of Plato. He was a great philosophic theologian, and at the same time a very earnest and eloquent preacher. With extraordinary power of intellect he had also remarkable power of imagination. Robert Hall said to a friend : "I have learned far more from John Howe than from any other author I ever read." Henry Rogers states that in conversation with him Hall once went so far as to say, "as a *minister*, he had derived more benefit from Howe than from all other divines put together." This fervid admiration is in part accounted for from the fact that Howe ably wrought out and powerfully stated, as in his treatise on "The Divine Prescience," precisely that scheme of moderate Calvinism which alone suited Mr. Hall's mind. But notice that Hall added, to the friend first mentioned : "There is an astonishing magnificence in his conceptions." Of this "magnificence" no one could better judge than Robert Hall. For two reasons mere cursory readers are in danger of

not appreciating Howe's eloquence. He is so addicted to metaphysical thinking that we often have difficulty in following him, and so are apt to be engrossed with his philosophical theology. The other reason is the ruggedness of his style. Mr. Hall says: "There was, I think, an innate inaptitude in Howe's mind for discerning minute graces and proprieties, and hence his sentences are often long and cumbersome. Still he was unquestionably the greatest of the Puritan divines." Both the obscurity and the awkwardness of style must have been partially relieved for his hearers by the delivery. But for us it is necessary in approaching the study of Howe to expect difficulty, and the consequent careful reading will bring us into acquaintance with many of the noblest thoughts the human mind can conceive.

The changes since Howe's time have in no respect been greater than in regard to the length of religious services. His contemporary Calamy says, with reference to the public fast days which were common during the Protectorate: Mr. Howe "told me it was upon those occasions his common way, to begin about nine in the morning, with a prayer for about a

quarter of an hour, in which he begged a blessing on the work of the day; and afterwards read and expounded a chapter or psalm, in which he spent about three-quarters of an hour; then prayed for about an hour, preached for another hour, and prayed for about half an hour. After this, he retired and took some little refreshment for about a quarter of an hour (the people singing all the while), and then came again into the pulpit and prayed for another hour, and gave them another sermon of about an hour's length; and so concluded the services of the day, at about four of the clock in the evening, with about half an hour or more in prayer." Seven hours of continuous services, with an intermission of fifteen minutes for the poor preacher, and none at all for the poor people! But in our restless age, have we not gone quite to the opposite extreme?

In the same year with Howe were born Barrow and Tillotson. Barrow (1630-77) was not only a very great man, but in many respects peculiar. His extraordinary physical strength and his force of character led to a youthful fondness for fighting, and in general he was so wayward and violent as to extort

from his despairing father the singular wish, that "if it pleased God to take away any of his children, it might be his son Isaac." This famous saying ought to be repeated on all occasions, as it is such a comfort to all young men who were bad boys. The physical strength deserves special notice, for great literary achievements require uncommon power of bodily endurance, and this is usually attended by corresponding bodily strength. Few men have produced numerous and able works who were not strong in body. But trusting in his bodily strength, Barrow indulged excessively in the use of tobacco—a species of indulgence which (I venture to suggest) is particularly injurious to persons of sedentary, studious and anxious life, unsafe even for healthy ministers, and inevitably hurtful to those who are at all feeble and nervous. Imprudent in various respects, he lived to the age of only forty-seven.

His early attainments were wonderful. He was made Fellow of Trinity at nineteen, and would have been appointed Greek Professor at twenty-four, but for the unpopularity, at that time, of his Arminianism. He then spent five years in continental travel, practicing rigorous economy, and engaged

in diligent study and intercourse with learned men. Do our American youth of to-day possess quite enough of that spirit which for sweet learning's sake has so often faced the most serious difficulties and practiced the sternest self-denial? I think Barrow and his contemporary Bourdaloue were the first great preachers of modern times who had been careful students of mathematics, and Barrow of the physical sciences also. There is something inspiring in the bare mention of the fact that Isaac Barrow resigned a mathematical chair at Cambridge to his pupil, Isaac Newton. But with all his devotion to these subjects he also laboriously studied the Classics and the Fathers, reading, for instance, the entire works of Chrysostom during a year's sojourn at Constantinople.

As your examinations are approaching, I will tell the story of Barrow's examination for orders. The aged bishop, wishing but little trouble, placed the candidates in a row, and asked three questions. First, *Quid est fides?* Barrow, near the end of the row, had time to think, and when it came to his turn answered, *Quod non vides. Excellenter*, said the bishop. To the second question, *Quid est spes?*

he answered, *Nondum res*, and the old man cried *Excellentius*. The third was *Quid est caritas?* and Barrow answered, *Ah! magister, id est raritas. Excellentissime*, shouted the bishop, *aut Erasmus est, aut diabolus.*

But while really a prodigy of attainments and intellectual achievements, Barrow was never a working pastor, and most of the sermons he left were in fact never preached. Hence he was lacking in practical point and directness, in the tact of the experienced preacher. His sermons are really *disquisitions* on some topic, written to satisfy his own mind, and designed to be read to others if he should find occasion. As disquisitions they are wonderfully comprehensive and complete, fully unfolding the subject proposed, and accumulating a wealth of interesting particulars. These particulars are sometimes wearisomely numerous, but, unlike the Puritan discourses we spoke of, they are in general naturally arranged, and each of them really adds something to the train of thought. His style is ill described by Doddridge as "laconic," for it is in the highest degree copious, but it is condensed, compact. Every paragraph seems a treatise, each long sentence is crowded with ideas.

And yet the whole has movement, vigorous and majestic movement, with the energy of profuseness, like a broadly rolling torrent.

Barrow is decidedly Arminian. The church of England was at first Calvinistic in doctrine, as the Articles show, but royalist hostility to the Puritans had gradually extended to a rejection of the doctrinal views especially associated with them, and Churchmen were by this time generally foes to Calvinism. Barrow however shows little enthusiasm for doctrine. His best sermons are on moral subjects, embracing all the leading topics of Christian morality. I know not where else in our language there can be found sermons on this important class of subjects so complete, forcible, satisfactory as those of Barrow. We have heretofore noticed the fact that he and Bourdaloue, both excelling in this respect, were both loving students of the early master on moral topics, Chrysostom. Read Jeremy Taylor to enrich the fancy, but Barrow to enrich the intellect and to show how the greatest copiousness may unite with great compactness and great energy of movement.

Of two other Anglican preachers in that age I shall speak but briefly.

Dr. South (1638-1716) cannot be recommended for doctrine, nor yet for spirit, as he is unloving, harsh in his polemics, and delights in a savage style of sarcasm. But he shows great vigor of thought, and skill in argument, particularly in refutation. The discussions are relieved by racy wit, the plan of discussion is simple and clear, for that age, and the style is condensed, direct and pungent. Mr. Beecher speaks of having found special pleasure and profit in an early study of South.

Archbishop Tillotson (1630-94), on the other hand, was a kindly and loving man, kind even to Nonconformists—which is much to say for a Churchman of that period. Like Barrow and South, he does not preach the “doctrines of grace,” but his polemics against Popery, and against the growing infidelity, are models of manly vigor, unstained by bitterness. Tillotson was by many of his contemporaries considered the foremost preacher of the age, and yet at the present day is far less admired than Jeremy Taylor and Barrow. I think this can be accounted for. As to the fact itself, Saurin, the French Protestant, who came to London six years after the good Archbishop’s death, and was doubtless all the more

attracted to his works by hearing of his kindness to the Huguenot Refugees, speaks with great enthusiasm of his writings, calling him 'my master,' as Cyprian used to call Tertullian. Bishop Burnet, who survived Tillotson only twenty years, says: "He was not only the best preacher of the age, but seemed to have brought preaching to perfection; his sermons were so well liked, that all the nation proposed him as a pattern, and studied to copy after him." The explanation is, I think, that Tillotson satisfied the yearning of the age for greater clearness and simplicity, both in arrangement of discourse and in style, a yearning doubtless strengthened, though not caused, by the French taste that prevailed in the court of Charles II. From the quirks and conceits of the Elizabethan prose, the involved, elaborate, sometimes stupendous sentences found even in Milton and Barrow, and the wearisome divisions and subdivisions of the Puritan preachers, and their contemporary Anglicans, to the easy and careless grace of the Addisonian period, the transition is made by Tillotson. Macaulay relates that Dryden was frequently heard to "own with pleasure that, if he had any talent for English prose, it was owing to his having often

read the writings of the great Archbishop Tillotson." But of this simplicity in arrangement and style we have long had numerous examples, some of them comparatively free from the faults of negligence which are noted in Tillotson and in Addison. As to topics, Tillotson's arguments against infidelity are of course superseded now, and his able polemics against the Papacy have no general interest. Thus it comes to pass that we find little profit, and little ground for special admiration, in works which were long considered the noblest models of composition.

Much depends on peculiarities of taste, and on felt personal need, but if I were required to recommend two of the great English preachers of the seventeenth century as likely most richly to reward thorough study at the present time, I should name Barrow among the Churchmen, and among the Puritans John Howe.

When this splendid group of preachers, with their contemporaries whom we have not been able to notice, had passed away, there threatened to be as complete a collapse of the English pulpit as was at the same time occurring in France. The Puritans, who

formed the vital element of the preceding century had fallen into popular disfavor, and the Act of Toleration under William and Mary took away the stimulus of persecution. What was worse, they were cut off from the universities, an unjust deprivation to which all Nonconformists were condemned until within the last few years. Their opportunities of education during the eighteenth century were confined to inferior "Academies," and the Scotch Universities. Many an aspiring youth, as for example, Joseph Butler, was tempted into conformity by the prospect, sometimes even the offer, of an education at Oxford or Cambridge. And it was only as the Dissenters' Colleges in England, and the Scottish Universities began to do vigorous teaching at the close of the century, that there was again a Nonconformist ministry of great power. As to the Churchmen, they had lost the stimulus of Puritan rivalry in preaching, and were now engaged in a life and death struggle for the truth of Christianity with that rising infidelity which had sprung on the one hand from the rationalizing philosophy of Descartes and Hobbes, and on the other from the reaction into immorality which ensued upon the fall of the Commonwealth.

This struggle for the truth of Revelation was powerfully maintained by Bishop Butler and others, while Richard Bentley was carrying classical learning to a height never surpassed in English history.

In this state of things, during the first half of the eighteenth century, English preaching did not rise above mediocrity. Bishop Atterbury, learned and elegant, but not strong, was the leading preacher of the day in the Establishment. Among the Dissenters, Watts had considerable ability and some eloquence, but would now be utterly forgotten were it not for his hymns. And Doddridge, worked to death with his Academy, his pastorate, his correspondence and authorship, has left good sermons and good books, but nothing of the highest excellence. In Scotland there was Maclaurin, whose sermon on “Glorying in the Cross” is truly one of the “Masterpieces of Pulpit Eloquence.” And in far New England lived the foremost preacher of the age, one of the very noblest in all history for intellect, imagination, and passion, for true and high eloquence, Jonathan Edwards.

Towards the middle of the century two men became known who have made illustrious the English preaching of their day. Whitefield and Wesley were

both Oxford men, and used their cultivation in that preaching to the masses which had been the glory of the Puritan period. While Bolingbroke assailed Revelation, and Chesterfield politely sneered at everything unselfish and good, and Christian Apologists vainly strove to convince the intellect of the upper classes, Whitefield and Wesley began to preach to the consciences of men, and thus felt no need of confining their discourse to the cultivated and refined. In this preaching to the conscience must always begin, I think, the reaction from an age of skepticism.

The biographies of Whitefield (1714-70) are full of instruction. The sermons we have were mere preparations, which in free delivery were so filled out with the thoughts suggested in the course of living speech, and so transfigured and glorified by enkindled imagination, as to be utterly different from the dull, cold thing that here lies before us —more different than the blazing meteor from this dark, metallic stone that lies half buried in the earth.

The sermons of Wesley (1703-91) require study, and will reward it. As printed, they were commonly written out after frequent delivery. They are too

condensed to have been spoken, in this form, to the colliers and the servant girls at five o'clock in the morning. But they must be in substance the same that he habitually preached, and they present a problem. Wesley had nothing of Whitefield's impassioned oratory. He spoke with simple earnestness, and remained quiet while his hearers grew wild with excitement. What was the secret? Where the hidden power? We can only say that it was undoubting faith and extraordinary force of character, together with a peculiarity seen also in some generals on the field of battle, that their most intense excitement makes little outward noise or show and yet subtly communicates itself to others. No man can repeatedly make others feel deeply who does not feel deeply himself; it is only a difference in the way of showing it. Of course this subtle electricity resides in the soul of the speaker much more than in the recorded discourse. But read carefully these condensed and calm-looking sermons, and see if you do not feel the power of the man, and find yourself sometimes strangely moved.

Late in the century, and dying just before Wesley, was Robert Robinson (1735-90), who has left numer-

ous sermons that are full of life, with flashes of genius. His erratic and uncertain course as to doctrine has caused him to be neglected. But a volume of his selected sermons, with a statement on the title-page that he was the author of the hymn, "Come, thou fount of every blessing," ought to find sale, and would be interesting and useful.

We come now to the nineteenth century, in which English pulpit literature is not only abundant but shows real power, and which must be divided, for our purpose, into an earlier and a later portion. It is obvious that we can only mention the principal names, and that very briefly.

In the early part of the century the leading preachers were Hall, Chalmers, and Jay.

The deeply interesting history of Robert Hall (1764-1831) is generally familiar, and remains as a choice morsel for those who have not read it. His precocity in childhood, his education, his inner life and character, and the origin of his works, are all topics full of interest. He was equally studious of thought and of style, and in both he reached the highest excellence. Take any one of his greatest sermons and you will see an exhibition of the noblest powers.

There is a thorough acquaintance with his subject, and a vigorous grasp of it. There is great knowledge of human nature, and this not in the way of mere crude observation but of profound reflection. He who at nine years of age delighted in Edwards on the Will and Butler's Analogy, has ever since been a profound student of metaphysics, ethics, and philosophical theology like that of Howe, and in this deep sense has studied human nature. He shows great analytical power, dissecting every part of the subject, and laying it open ; and at the same time adequate power of construction, giving the discourse a clear, simple and complete plan. We also perceive singular power of argument. The whole sermon is often an argument, and upon a view of the subject well chosen for general effect ; and the arguments, though usually profound, are made level to the capacity of all intelligent hearers. His imagination is exalted, imperial, but constantly subordinated to the purposes of the argument. Nowhere is there imagery that appears to be introduced for its own sake. The most splendid bursts, the loftiest flights, seem to come just where they are natural and needful. And the style—well, it is a model of perspicuity, energy, and elegance

The terms are chosen with singular felicity. The sentences are never very long, nor in the slightest degree involved, and longer and shorter sentences are agreeably mingled, while the rhythm is greatly varied, and always harmonious. Do we mean to say that Mr. Hall's style is perfect? No, there are palpable, though slight defects, in his most finished productions, as there are in every work of every writer. And in one important respect Mr. Hall's style is, if not faulty, yet quite opposed to the taste of our own time. It has a dignity that is too uniformly sustained. Though not at all pompous, it is never familiar, and thus its range is restricted. There is the same difference with regard to style, between that age and this, as with regard to dress and manners. And while we are sometimes too free and easy, in all these directions, yet upon the whole we have gained. If Robert Hall lived in our time, he would have greater flexibility, and thereby his noble sermons would be sensibly improved. Whether he would not, if reared in our age, have been lacking in more important respects, is another question.

Christmas Evans, the Welshman (1766-1838), is a notable example of untutored eloquence. His undis-

ciplined imagination rioted in splendors, his descriptive powers captivated the enthusiastic Keltic mountaineers, and the whirlwinds of his passion bore them aloft to the skies. For such a man, thorough education might have hampered the wings of soaring fancy, and made him really less effective—a Pegasus harnessed to the plough.

William Jay (1769–1853) was not a man of shining gifts, but is an excellent model of sermonizing, in respect to his fresh, ingenious and yet natural *plans*, and in his copious, often strikingly felicitous quotations from the Bible. Read his sermons, and also his admirable Morning and Evening Exercises, which are sermons on a small scale.

Robert Hall's most gifted contemporary in the pulpit was Chalmers (1780–1847), whose rare genius and unique method in preaching one would find pleasure, if there were opportunity, in attempting to depict. No student of English preaching must fail to read the magnificent Astronomical Sermons, nor at least a part of the expository Lectures on Romans. He will find that the one thought of each discourse is not merely presented in ever varying beauty, like the kaleidoscope to which Hall com-

pared Chalmers' preaching, but as in our stereoscope it is made to stand out in solid form and full proportions. His religious philosophy is elevated and satisfying. His style is beautiful, but any imitation of it would be unpleasing if not ridiculous.

I could wish to speak at some length of the English preachers who have attained distinction in the last thirty or forty years. I should want to commend Melvill for his numerous and suggestive examples of rich discourses drawn by legitimate process from the most unlikely texts; and to tell of John Henry Newman, with his deep, magnetic nature, whose plain and intensely vital discourses make the soul quiver with solemn awe. To recommend Frederick Robertson would be a work of supererogation, for everybody has been reading him, but there might be profit in attempting to discriminate, as he himself could not, between the true and false elements which had grown up together in his thought, and between the strength and the weakness of his so attractive discourses. I should direct special attention to Canon Liddon, now the leading preacher in the Church of England, whose elaborate sermons show us how the most difficult fundamental

questions of religion, questions of Providence and prayer, of sin and atonement, of the soul and immortality, may be treated with reference to the ablest attacks of disbelief and doubt, and yet without making the sermon unintelligible, in general, to any hearers of fair capacity and cultivation. And there is a whole class of recent preachers in England and Scotland, who have given new power and interest to *expository* preaching, bringing to bear the methods and results of modern Biblical learning, and not disregarding, as did Chrysostom and in a less degree Luther, the absolute need, in order to the most effective discourse, of unity and plan. Alford's other sermons are not of great power; but his Sunday afternoon lectures in London, with many hearers holding their Greek Testaments, were, according to the testimony of Bishop Ellicott\* and others, surpassingly instructive and engaging. Dr. Vaughan's expository sermons on the Book of Revelation are quite good. Johnstone on James and on Philippians meets exactly the wants of a highly educated but gospel-loving congregation. And Candlish, the foremost Scottish preacher of the century except Chalmers, has in his

\* See the Bishop's excellent paper in the *Life of Alford*.

Genesis, First Epistle of John, and fifteenth chapter of Corinthians, taught a new and high lesson in pulpit exposition.

The time would fail to speak of strong Dr. Binney and Newman Hall and Joseph Parker, all deservedly famous; of Bishop Wilberforce and Bishop Magee, whom one of his colleagues on the Episcopal bench described to me as the finest extemporaneous speaker in England; of Guthrie and Caird, Cumming and Ker; of Landells and Maclarens, whose little volumes of brief, fresh and spirited discourses are very suggestive to city pastors; and of Spurgeon, a model in several respects, but whose greatest distinction, to my mind, is the fact that he has so long gathered and held vast congregations, and kept the ear of the reading world, without ever forsaking the gospel in search of variety, or weakening his doctrine to suit the tastes of the age.

But I have purposely spoken chiefly of both the English and the French preachers who lived *before our own time*. I think that young men should be specially exhorted to read old books. If you have a friend in the ministry who is growing old, urge him to read mainly new books, that he may freshen

his mind, and keep in sympathy with his surroundings. "But must not young men keep abreast of the age?" Certainly, only the first thing is to *get* abreast of the age, and in order to this they must go back to where the age came from, and join there the great procession of its moving thought.

Can I suggest anything, in conclusion, with reference to the character and demands, as to preaching, of the time to which you will belong, the coming third or half of a century? I shall barely touch a few points, without any expansion.

(1) It becomes every day more important to draw a firm line of demarkation between Physical Science and Theology, and to insist that each party shall work on its own side the line in peace. Even where there appears to be ground of antagonism, it will commonly be best not to court conflict, but to work quietly on in the assurance that we have truth, and that as new scientific theories pass out of speculation into matured truth also, it will then become plain enough in what way the two departments of truth are to be reconciled.

(2) As the past generation has witnessed a pain-

fully rapid growth of religious skepticism in England and America, so it is to be expected that your generation will see a great and blessed reaction. Unless I am mistaken, that reaction has already in some directions begun to show itself. You will promote the healthier tendencies by preaching the definite doctrines of the Bible, and by abundant exposition of the Bible text. Men grow weary of mere philosophical speculation and vague sentiment, and will listen again to the sweet and solemn voice of the Word of God.

(3) Our age has made remarkable progress as to one great doctrine of Christianity—progress, not in apprehending the doctrine, but in realizing its truth. As the fourth century made clear the Divinity of Christ, so the nineteenth century has brought out his Humanity. The most destructive criticism has unconsciously contributed to this result. It will henceforth be possible to present more complete and symmetrical views of the Lord Jesus Christ and his work of salvation than the pulpit has generally exhibited in any past age. Picture vividly before your hearers Jesus the man, while not allowing them to forget that he was Christ the Son of God, and you will mightily win them to love and serve him.

(4) It will be important to sympathize with and use the *humanitarian* tendencies which have become so strongly developed. Show in a thousand ways what Christianity has done and can do for all the noblest interests of humanity, and how all this is possible only because Christianity is itself divine. The one true gospel of humanity is the gospel of the Son of God.

(5) You must know how to unite breadth of view, and charity in feeling, with fidelity to truth. The age is in love with *liberality*, and allows that word to cover many a falsehood and many a folly. But the age will feel more and more its need of *truth*, and “speaking truth in love” will meet its double want.

(6) As to *methods* of preaching, you are entered upon a time of great *freedom* in composition, a time in which men are little restrained by classical models or current usage, whether as to the structure or the style of discourse. This is true in general literature, and also in preaching. You may freely adopt any of the methods which have been found useful in any age of the past, or by varied experiment may learn for yourselves how best to meet the wants of

the present. Freedom is always a blessing and a power, when it is used with wise self-control.

(7) It is scarcely necessary to caution you against the love of *sensation* which marks our excitable age. We see this in many writers of history and romance, even in some writers on science, to say nothing of numerous politicians and periodicals. A few preachers, some of them weak but some really strong men, have fallen in with this tendency of the time. Where they have done much real good, it has been rather in spite of this practice, than by means of it, and they should be instructive as a warning.

(8) In your time, as in all times, the thing needed will be not oratorical display but genuine eloquence, the eloquence which springs from vigorous thinking, strong convictions, fervid imagination and passionate earnestness ; and true spiritual success will be attained only in proportion as you gain, in humble prayer, the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

I trust, brethren, that these observations on the History of Preaching—for the abounding imperfections of which I shall not stop to apologize—may by God's blessing be of some use in preparing you for the difficult and responsible, yet sweet and blessed

work to which your lives are devoted. I trust you will feel incited to study the instructive history and inspiring discourses of the great preachers who have gone before you, and will be stimulated by their example to develop every particle of your native power, and to fill your whole life with zealous usefulness. Themistocles said the trophies of Marathon would not let him sleep. May the thought of all the noble preachers and their blessed work kindle in you a noble emulation. And when weary and worn, stir yourselves to fresh zeal by remembering the rest that remaineth and the rewards that cannot fail. "O to shine," said Whitefield one night as he stood preaching in the open air and looked up to the brilliant heavens, "O to shine as the brightness of the firmament, as yonder stars forever and ever."

## APPENDIX.

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WITHOUT attempting anything like a complete account of the Literature belonging to those departments of the History of Preaching which are treated in these lectures, it may be useful to mention some of the principal works in each case, so far as known to the author.

ON LECTURE II. (Preaching in the Early Christian centuries).

I. Works of the Fathers, with the Lives, Prefaces, Monita, etc., of the Benedictine and Migne editions.

Works on Church History.

Gibbon.

Bingham's Antiquities, and Smith's Dict. of Christian Antiquities.

II. *Paniel*, Geschichte der christlichen Beredsam-

keit und der Homiletik, 1839. (Much the most thorough work on the General History of Preaching; but only a fragment, ending with Augustine. Most of the chapter on Chrysostom was translated in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1847.)

*Ebert*, Gesch. der christlich-lateinischen Literatur, 1874. (Extends to Charlemagne, and designed as Introduction to General History of the Literature of the Middle Ages in the West. A work of great learning, vigor and freshness, in which, however, the history of preaching necessarily occupies a subordinate place.)

*Villemain*, Tableau de l'Éloquence Chrétienne au IV<sup>e</sup> Siècle. (New edition, 1870. A series of very entertaining essays.)

*Moule*, Christian Oratory during the first five centuries. London, 1859. (A prize essay of considerable interest and value.)

*Brömel*, Homiletische Charakterbilder, 1869-74. (Begins with sketches of Chrysostom and Augustine. Well written and fair.)

*Fish*, Masterpieces of Pulpit Eloquence. New York. (Contains sermons, with brief historical sketches of periods and of individual preachers. It

would be easy to point out faults in this work, but it is convenient and useful.)

III. On the Life of Chrysostom, *Neander* is still valuable, *Perthes* not worth much ; *Stephens* (London, 1872) is the fullest and best work ; *Förster* (Gotha, 1869) treats ably of Chrysostom in relation to Doctrine-history ; "The Mouth of Gold," by Edwin Johnson (New York, 1873), a sort of dramatic poem on the life and times of Chrysostom, is worth reading. —*Martin, Saint Jean Chrysostome, ses œuvres et son siècle.* Paris, 1875, three volumes, 8 vo., I have not seen.

### LECTURE III. (Medieval and Reformation Preaching.)

Works on Church History, and special works on the Reformation.

Works of St. Bernard, Antony of Padua, Thomas Aquinas, Tauler.

Lives and Works of Luther, Calvin, and Zwingle.

*Lenz, Geschichte der christlichen Homiletik,* 1839. (Useful, though meagre.)

*Neale, Medieval Preaching.* London, 1856. (Not thorough, but serviceable.)

*Baring-Gould*, Post-Medieval Preaching. London, 1865. (A mere collection of curious odds and ends about second-rate preachers.)

*Brömel*, Charakterbilder (as above).

Histories of German Preaching, especially those by Schenk and Schmidt, give accounts of Luther as a preacher.

*Fish*, Masterpieces (as before).

#### LECTURE IV. (Great French Preachers.)

Works of the Preachers in question, especially of Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Massillon, Saurin, A. Monod, Bersier.

*Voltaire*, Age of Louis XIV.

*Vinet*, Histoire de la Prédication parmi les Réformés de France au Dix-Septième Siècle. Paris, 1860. (A remarkably good book, containing sketches, representative extracts, critical discussions, and practical hints.)

*Feugère*, Bourdaloue : Sa Prédication et son Temps. 2<sup>me</sup> éd. Paris. 1874. (Thorough and able.)

Bossuet and his Contemporaries. New York,

1875. (By an English lady. Readable, and of some value.)

*Berthault, Saurin et la Prédication Protestante jusqu'à la fin du règne de Louis XIV.* Paris, 1875. (Pretty good, but not like Feugère or Vinet.)

*Bungener, The Preacher and the King, or Bourdaloue in the Court of Louis XIV.* (A new edition of the translation is just issued. Well known as an interesting and instructive story.)

*Alexander, Thoughts on Preaching.* Art. "Eloquence of the French Pulpit." (Quite good.)

*Turnbull, Pulpit Orators of France and Switzerland.* New York, 1848. (Several sermons from the first half of this century, with brief sketches of the preachers.)

*Fish, Masterpieces* (as before), and also his *Pulpit Eloquence of the nineteenth century.* (The translation he gives of Bourdaloue is faulty, and that of Massillon is very bad.)

#### LECTURE V. (English Pulpit.)

Lives and Works of the Preachers in question.

Works on English History.

Works on Ecclesiastical History of England, especially Burnet, Fuller, Wordsworth's Eccl. Biography, Stoughton.

Fish's two works (as above).

Alexander, Thoughts on Preaching. Art. "The Pulpit in Ancient and Modern Times."

Great Modern Preachers. London. 1875. A small volume, containing a dozen pleasant sketches of English Preachers.

Our Bishops and Deans. By Rev. F. Arnold. London, 1875. 2 volumes, 8vo. Hastily written, but entertaining.

marcus, can

"She turning to Him said Robbins  
I He is Master.

1. M. of goodness in highest
2. M. of supreme affliction
3. M. of Love.

1. a. supreme Good without measure
- b. " " " Associate
- c. " " " Silence

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